

T R A V E L S

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE,

IN THE YEARS

1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

BY JAMES BRUCE, OF KINNAIRD, ESQ. F. R. S.

VOL. IV.

*Nilus in extremum fugit perterritus orbem,
Occulitque caput, quod adhuc latet.*

OVID Metam.

D U B L I N:

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M,DCC,XCI.



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FIRST ATTEMPT TO DISCOVER THE SOURCE OF THE
NILE FRUSTRATED—A SUCCESSFUL JOURNEY THI-
THER, WITH A FULL ACCOUNT OF EVERY THING
RELATING TO THAT CELEBRATED RIVER.

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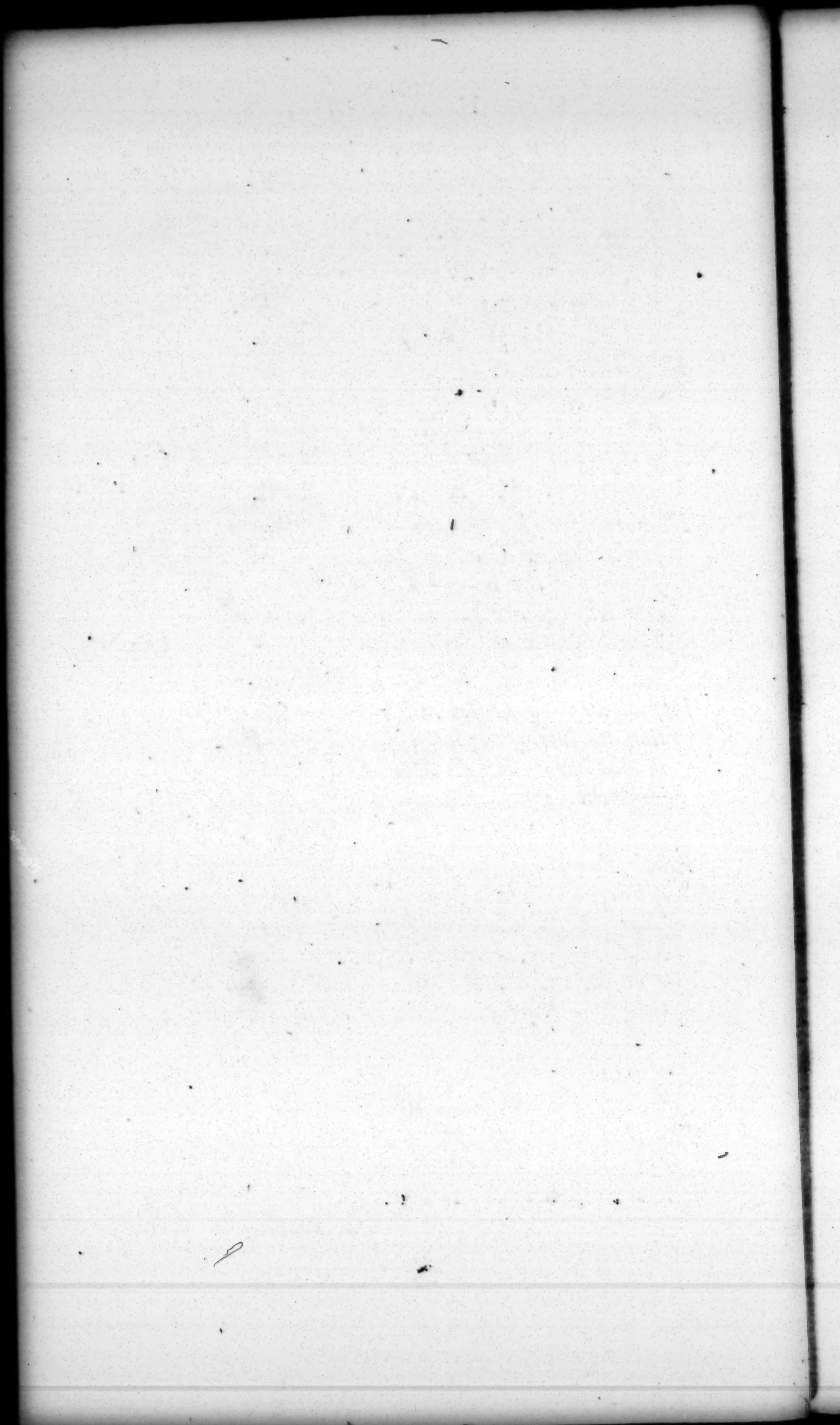
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TRAVELS

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE.

BOOK VI.

FIRST ATTEMPT TO DISCOVER THE SOURCE OF THE NILE
FRUSTRATED—A SUCCESSFUL JOURNEY THITHER,
WITH A FULL ACCOUNT OF EVERY THING RELATING
TO THAT CELEBRATED RIVER.



CHAP. I.

The Author made Governor of Ras el Fael.

I SOON received an instance of kindness from Ayto Confu which gave me great pleasure on several accounts. On the south part of Abyssinia, on the frontiers of Senaar, is a hot, unwholesome, low stripe of country, inhabited entirely by Mahometans, divided into several small districts, known by the general name of Mazaga. Of this I

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B

have

have often before spoken, and shall have further occasion to treat of it in the sequel.

The Arabs of Sennaar that are on bad terms with the governor of Atbara, fly hither across the desert to avoid the rapine and violence of that cruel tyrant. The arrival of these produces in an instant the greatest plenty at Ras el Feel; markets are held every where; cattle of all kinds, milk, butter, elephants teeth, hides, and several other commodities, are sold to a great amount.

The Arabs are of many different tribes; the chief are the Daveina, then the Nile. These, besides getting a good market, and food for their cattle and protection for themselves, have this great additional advantage, they escape the Fly, and consequently are not pillaged, as the rest of the Arabs in Atbara are, when changing abodes to avoid the havock made by that insect. In return for this, they constantly bring horses from Atbara, below Sennaar, for the king's own use, and for such of his cavalry who are armed with coats of mail, no Abyssinian horse, or very few at least, being capable of that burden.

Ayto Confu had many districts of land from his father Kasmati Netcho, as well as some belonging to his mother Ozoro Esther, which lay upon that frontier; it was called Ras el Feel, and had a fendick and nagareet, but, as it was governed always by a deputy who was a Mahometan, it had no rank among the great governments of the state. Besides these lands, the patrimony of Confu, Ras Michael had given him more, and with them

them this government, young as he was, from favour to his mother Ozoro Esther. This Mahometan deputy was named Abdel Jelleel, a great coward, who had refused to bring out his men, tho' summoned, to join the king when marching against Fafil. He had also quarrelled with the Daveina, and robbed them, so that they traded no more with Ras el Feel, brought no more horses, and the district was consequently nearly ruined, whilst a great outcry was raised against Abdel Jelleel by the merchants who used to trade at that market, not having now money enough to pay the *meery*.

Ammonios, his Billetana Gueta, was the person Ayto Confu had destined to go to Ras el Feel to reduce it to order, and displace Abdel Jelleel; but Ras Michael had put him as a man of trust over the black horse under me, so he was employed otherwise. Confu himself was now preparing to go thither to settle another deputy in the place of Abdel Jelleel, and he had asked the assistance of troops from the king, by which this came to my knowledge.

The first time I saw Ozoro Esther, I told her, that, unless she had a mind to have her son die speedily, she should, by every means in her power, dissuade him from his journey to Ras el Feel, being a place where the bloody flux never ceased to rage; and this complaint had never perfectly left him since he had had the small-pox, but had worn him to a shadow. There could be no surer way therefore of destroying him than letting him go

thither as he proposed. He had been for some time indeed taking bark, which had done him great service. His mother Ozoro Esther, the Iteghè, whose first favourite he was, and all his friends, now took the alarm, upon which the Ras forbade him positively to go.

Negade Ras Mahomet, of whom we have already spoken, brother to Hagi Saleh, who had procured me my first lodging at Gondar, was head of all the Mahometans in that capital, nay, I may say, in Abyssinia. He, too, was a favourite of the Ras, and shewed the same attachment to me, on account of Metical Aga, as had his brother Saleh. This man came to me one morning, and told me, that Yafine, whom I had brought with me to Abyssinia, and was recommended to me by Metical Aga, had married Abdel Jelleel's daughter, and that a son of Saleh had married a daughter of Yafine's. He said there was not a man in Abyssinia that was a braver soldier and better horseman than Yafine; that he had no love for money, but was a man of probity and honour, as indeed I had always found him; that the people of Ras el Feel, to a man, wished to have him for their governor in the room of Abdel Jelleel; and that all the Arabs, as well as Shekh Fidele, governor of Atbara, for Sennaar, wished the same.

Mahomet did not dare to speak for fear of Ozoro Esther, who was thought to favour Abdel Jelleel, but he promised, that, if Ayto Confu would appoint him instead of Abdel Jelleel, he would give him
him

him 50 ounces of gold, besides what Yafine should allow upon his settlement, and would manage the affair with Michael when he had leave so to do. He added that his brother Saleh should furnish Yafine with 200 men from the Mahometans at Gondar, completely armed with their firelocks, and commanded by young Saleh in person.

I was not at this time any judge of the expediency of the measure; but one resolution I had made, and determined to keep, that I never would accept a post or employment for myself, or solicit any such for others. My reader will see, that, for my own safety, most unwillingly I had been obliged to break the first of these resolutions almost as soon as it was formed, and I was now deliberating whether it was not better that I should break the other for the same reason. Two things weighed with me extremely, the experience of Yafine's prudence and attachment to me during the whole journey, and my determination to return by Sennaar, and never trust myself more in the hands of that bloody assassin the Naybe of Masuah, who I understood had, at several times, manifested his bad intentions towards me when I should return by that island.

I flattered myself, that great advantage would accrue to me by Yafine's friendship with the Arabs and the Shekh of Atbara; and, having consulted Ayto Aylo first, I made him propose it to Ozoro Esther. I found, upon speaking to that princess, that there was something embarrassing in the affair.

She did not answer directly, as usual, and I apprehended that the objection was to Yafine. I was no longer in doubt of this, when Ozoro Esther told me Abba Salama had strongly espoused the cause of Abdel Jelleel, who had bribed him. Notwithstanding this, I resolved to mention it myself to Confu, that I might have it in my power to know where the objection lay, and give a direct answer to Yafine.

I saw Confu soon after at Koscam. His bark being exhausted, I brought him more, and he seemed to be much better, and in great spirits. The time was favourable in all its circumstances, and I entered into the matter directly. I was very much surprised to hear him say gravely, and without hesitation, "I have as good an opinion of Yafine as you can have; and I have as bad a one of Abdel Jelleel as any man in Gondar, for which, too, I have sufficient reason, as it is but lately the king told me peevishly enough, I did not look to my affairs, (which is true) as he understood that the district was ruined by having been neglected. But I am no longer gover of Ras el Feel, I have resigned it. I hope they will appoint a wiser and better man; let him choose for his deputy Yafine, or who else he pleases, for I have sworn by the head of the Iteghè, I will not meddle or make with the government of Ras el Feel more.

Tecla Mariam, the king's secretary, came in at that instant with a number of other people. I
wanted

wanted to take Confu aside to ask him further if he knew who this governor was, but he shuffled among the crowd, saying, " My mother will tell you all ; the man who is appointed is your friend, and I think Yafine may be the deputy." I now lost no time in going to Ozoro Esther to intercede for the government of Ras el Feel for Yafine.

Among the crowd I met first Tecla Mariam, the king's secretary, who taking me by the hand, said, with a laughing countenance, " O ho, I wish you joy ; this is like a man ; you are now no stranger, but one of us ; why was not you at court ?" I said I had no particular business there, but that I came hither to see Ayto Confu, that he might speak in favour of Yafine to get him appointed deputy of Ras el Feel. " Why don't you appoint him yourself ? says he ; what has Confu to do with the affair now ? You don't intend always to be in leading strings ? You may thank the king for yourself, but I would never advise you to speak one word of Yafine to him ; it is not the custom ; you may, if you please, to Confu, he knows him already. His estate lies all around you, and he will enforce your orders if there should be any need."

" Pardon me, Tecla Mariam, said I, if I do not understand you. I came here to solicit for Yafine, that Confu or his successor would appoint him their deputy, and you answer that you advise me to appoint him myself."—" And so I do, replies Tecla Mariam : Who is to appoint him but you ?

you? You are governor of Ras el Feel; are you not?" I stood motionless with astonishment. "It is no great affair, says he, and I hope you will never see it. It is a hot, unwholesome country, full of Mahometans; but its gold is as good as any Christian gold whatever. I wish it had been Begemder with all my heart, but there is a good time coming."

After having recovered myself a little from my surprise, I went to Ayto Confu to kiss his hand as my superior, but this he would by no means suffer me to do. A great dinner was provided us by the Iteghè; and Yafine being sent for, was appointed, cloathed, that is invested, and ordered immediately to Ras el Feel to his government, to make peace with the Daveina, and bring all the horses he could get with him from thence, or from Atbara. I sent there also that poor man who had given us the small blue beads on the road, as I have already mentioned. The having thus provided for those two men, and secured, as I thought, a retreat to Sennaar for myself, gave me the first real pleasure that I had received since landing at Masuah; and that day, in company with Heikel, Tecla Mariam, Engedan, Aylo, and Guebra Denghel, all my great friends and the hopes of this country, I for the first time, since my arrival in Abyssinia, abandoned myself to joy.

My constitution was, however, too much weakened to bear any excesses. The day after, when I went home to Emfras, I found myself attacked with a slow fever, and, thinking that it was the prelude

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prelude of an ague, with which I was often tormented, I fell to taking bark, without any remission, or, where the remission was very obscure, I shut myself up in the house, upon my constant regimen of boiled rice, with abundant draughts of cold water.

I was at this time told that there was a great commotion at Gondar; that a monk of Debra Libanos, a favourite of the Iteghè and of the king too, had excommunicated Abba Salama in a dispute about religion at the Itchegué's house; and, the day after, Hagi Mahomet, one of Ras Michael's tent-makers, who lived in the town below, through which the high road from Gojam passes, came to tell me, that many monks from Gojam had passed through the low town, and expressed themselves very much dissatisfied by hearing that a Frank (meaning me) was in the town above. He said that when they came in sixes and sevens at a time, there was no fear; but when they returned altogether (as Michael sometimes made them do) they were like so many madmen; therefore, if I resolved to stay at Emfras, he wished I would order him to send me some Mahometan soldiers, who would strictly act as I commanded them.

At the same time I received news that my great friend Tecla Mariam, and his daughter of the same name, the most beautiful woman in Abyssinia after Ozoro Esther, were both ill at Gondar.

dar. There needed no more for me to repair instantly thither. I muffled my head up as great officers generally do when riding near the capital. I passed at different times above twenty of these fanatics on the road, six and seven together; but either they did not know me, or at least, if they did, they did not say any thing; I came to Ayto Aylo's, who was sitting, complaining of sore eyes, with the queen's chamberlain, Ayto Heikel.

AFTER the usual salutation, I asked Aylo what was the matter in town? and if it was true that Sebaat Gzier had excommunicated Abba Salama? and told him that I had conceived these disputes about faith had been long ago settled. He answered with an affected gravity, "That it was not so; that this was of such importance that he doubted it would throw the country into great convulsions; and he would not advise me to be seen in the street."—"Tell me, I beseech you, said I, what it is about. I hope not the old story of the Franks?"—"No, no, says he, a great deal worse than that, it is about Nebuchadnezzar:"—and he broke out in a great fit of laughter. "The monk of Debra Libanos says, that Nebuchadnezzar is a saint; and Abba Salama says that he was a Pagan, Idolater, and a Turk, and that he is burning in hell fire with Dathan and Abiram."—"Very well, said I, I cannot think he was a Mahometan if he was a Pagan and Idolater; But I am sure I shall make no enemies upon this
dis-

dispute.”—“ You are deceived, says he; unless you tell your opinion in this country you are reckoned an enemy to both parties. Stay, therefore, all night, and do not appear in the streets;” and, upon my telling them I was going to Tecla Mariam’s, who was ill, they rose with me to go thither, for the strictest friendship subsisted between them. We met there with Ozoro Esther, who was visiting the beautiful Tecla Mariam in her indisposition. Seeing Aylo, Heikel, and me together at that time of night, she insisted that the young lady and I should be married, and she declared roundly she would see it done before she left the house. As neither of my patients were very ill, a great deal of mirth followed. Ozoro Esther sat late; there was no occasion for the compliment of seeing her home, she had above three hundred men with her.

After she was gone the whole discourse turned upon religion, what we believed or did not believe in our country, and this continued till daylight, when we all agreed to take a little sleep, then breakfast, and go to court. We did so, but Aylo went to Koscam, and Tecla Mariam to the Ras, so I met none of them with the king. When I went in he was hearing a pleading upon a cause of some consequence, and paying great attention. One of the parties had finished, the other was replying with a great deal of graceful action, and much energy and eloquence.—They were bare
down

down to their very girdle, and would seem rather prepared for boxing than for speaking.

This being over, the room was cleared, and I made my prostration. "I do demand of you, says the king abruptly, Whether Nebuchadnezzar is a saint or no?" I bowed, saying, "Your majesty knows I am no judge of these matters, and it makes me enemies to speak about them."—"I know, says he gravely, that you will answer my question when I ask it; let me take care of the rest."—"I never thought, said I, Sir, that Nebuchadnezzar had any pretensions to be a saint. He was a scourge in God's hand, as is famine or the plague, but that does not make either of them a wholesome visitation."—"What! says he, Does not God call him his servant? Does he not say that he did his bidding about Tyre, and that he gave him Egypt to plunder for his recompence? Was not it by God's command he led his people into captivity? and did not he believe in God, when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego escaped from the fiery furnace? Surely he must be a saint."—"I am perfectly satisfied, said I, and give my consent to his canonization, rather than either your majesty, or Abba Salama, should excommunicate me upon the question" He now laughed out, and seemed greatly diverted, and was going to speak, when Tecla Mariam, and a number of others, came in. I withdrew to the side with respect, as the secretary had a small piece of paper in his hand. He staid about two minutes with the king, when the room filled, and the levee began. I wished Tecla

Mariam

Mariam might not be the worse for last night's sitting up. "The better, the better, says he, much the better. You see we are becoming all good, day and night we are busy about religion."-----
 "Are you upon Nebuchadnezzar to day, friend? said I; the king says to me he is a saint."---"Just such a saint, I suppose, says he, as our Ras Michael, who, I believe, is jealous of him, for he is going himself to decide this dispute immediately. Go to the Ashoa * and you will hear it."

There was a number of people in the outer court of the king's house, crying very tumultuously for a convocation of the church. At twelve o'clock there was no word of Michael at the palace; but I saw the members of the council there, and expected he was coming. Instead of this, the large kettle-drum, or nagareet, called *the lion*, was carried to the king's gate, which occasioned great speculation. But presently proclamation was made in these words, given me by Tecla Mariam himself:-----"Hear! hear! hear! they that pretend they do not hear this, will not be the last punished for disobeying:---Whereas many disorderly and idle persons have flocked to this capital for some days past, and brought no provisions for themselves or others, and have frightened the country people from coming to market, whereby all degrees of men, in this capital, are threatened with famine, and scarcity is already begun; this is, therefore, to give notice,

* The largest court, or outer space, surrounding the king's house.

That

That if any such people, after twelve o'clock to-morrow, be found in this city, or in the roads adjoining thereto, they shall be punished like rebels and robbers, and their fault not prescribed for seven years."

And, in about ten minutes afterwards, another proclamation was made:----"The king orders four hundred Galla of his troops to patrol the streets all the night, and disperse summarily all sorts of people that they shall find gathered together; commands thirty horse to patrol between Debra Tzai and Kolla, thirty on the road to Woggora, and thirty on that to Emfras, to protect our subjects coming to market, and going about their other lawful business: They that are wise will keep themselves well when they are so." There was no need of a second proclamation. The monks were all wise, and returned in an instant every man to his home. The Galla were mentioned to terrify only, for they did not exist, Ozoro Esther having cleared the palace of that nation; but the monks knew there would be found people in their place every bit as bad as Galla, and did not choose to risk the trial of the difference.

At this time a piece of bad news was circulated at Gondar, that Kasmati Boro, whom the Ras had left governor at Damot, had been beaten by Fasil, and obliged to retire to his own country in Gojam, to Stadis Amba, near the passage of the Nile, at Minè; and that Fasil, with a larger army of stranger Galla than that he had brought to Fagitta,

gitta, had taken possession of Burè, the usual place of his residence. This being privately talked of as true, I asked Kefla Yafous in confidence what he knew of it. Upon its being confirmed, I could not disguise my sorrow, as I conceived that unexpected turn of affairs to be an invincible obstacle to my reaching the source of the Nile. "You are mistaken, says Kefla Yafous to me, it is the best thing can happen to you. Why you desire to see those places I do not know, but this I am sure of, you never will arrive there with any degree of safety while Fasil commands. He is as perfect a Galla as ever forded the Nile; he has neither word, nor oath, nor faith that can bind him; he does mischief for mischief's sake, and then laughs at it."

"Michael, after the battle of Fagitta, proposed to his army to pass the rainy season at Burè, and quarter the troops in the towns and villages about. He would have staid a year with them, to shew that Fasil could not help them, but he was overruled. At Hydar Michael (that is, in November next) all Abyssinia will march against him, and he will not stay for us, and this time we shall not leave his country till we have eaten it bare; and then, at your ease, you will see every thing, defend yourself by your own force, and be beholden to nobody; and remember what I say, peace with Fasil there never will be, for he does not desire it; nor, till you see his head upon a pole, or Michael's army encamped at Burè, will you (if you are wise) ever attempt to pass Mait-sha."

sha." Memorable words! often afterwards reflected upon, though they were not strictly verified in the extent they were meant when spoken.

C H A P. II.

Battle of Banja—Conspiracy against Michael—The Author retires to Emfras—Description of Gondar, Emfras, and Lake Tzana.

AFTER Fasil's defeat at Fagitta, and the affront he received at Affoa in the heart of his own country, he had continued his route to Burè, a district of the Agows, where was his constant residence. After this he had crossed the Nile into the country of Bizamo, and Boro de Gago had taken up his residence at Burè, when Michael returned to Gondar; but no sooner had he heard of his arrival in those parts than he marched with a number of horse, and forced his rival to retire to Gojam.

The Agows were all loyalists in their hearts, had been forced to join Fasil, but, immediately after his defeat, had declared for Michael. The first thing, therefore, Fasil did, when returned to Burè, was to attack the Agows on every side; a double advantage was sure to follow this victory, the famishing his enemies at Gondar, and converting so rich a territory to his own use, by extirpating

the Agows, and laying it open to be possessed by his countrymen, the Galla, from Bizamo.

A very obstinate battle was fought at Banja, one of their principal settlements, in which the Agows were entirely defeated, seven of their chiefs killed, all men of great consequence, among whom was Ayamico, a very near relation of the king. The news were first brought by a son of Nanna Georgis, chief of the Agows, who escaped from the battle. Michael was at dinner, and I was present. It was one of his carousals for the marriage of Powuffen, when young Georgis came into the room, in a torn and dirty habit, unattended, and almost unperceived, and presented himself at the foot of the table. Michael had then in his hand a cup of gold, it being the exclusive privilege of the governor of the province of Tigré to drink out of such a cup; it was full of wine; before a word was spoke, and, upon the first appearance of the man, he threw the cup and wine upon the ground, and cried out, I am guilty of the death of these people. Every one arose, the table was removed, and Georgis told his misfortune, that Nanna Georgis his father, Zeegam Georgis, the next in rank among them, Ayamico the king's relation, and four other chiefs, were slain at Banja, and their race nearly extirpated by a victory gained with much bloodshed, and after cruelly pursued in retaliation for that of Fagitta.

A council

A council was immediately called, where it was resolved, that, though the rainy season was at hand, the utmost expedition should be made to take the field; that Gusso and Powuffen should return to their provinces, and increase their army to the utmost of their power; that the king should take the low road by Foggora and Dara, there to join the troops of Begemder and Amhara, cross the Nile at the mouth of the lake, above the second cataract, as it is called, and march thence straight to Burè, which, by speedy marches, might be done in five or six days. No resolution was ever embraced with more alacrity; the cause of the Agows was the cause of Gondar, or famine would else immediately follow. The king's troops and those of Michael were all ready, and had just refreshed themselves by a week's festivity.

Gusso and Powuffen, after having sworn to Michael that they never would return without Fasil's head, decamped next morning with very different intentions in their hearts; for no sooner had they reached Begemder than they entered into a conspiracy in form against Michael, which they had long meditated; they had resolved to make peace with Fasil, and swear with him a solemn league, that they were but to have one cause, one council, and one interest, till they had deprived Michael of his life and dignity. The plan was, that, in hopes to join with them, the army should pass by Dara and the mouth of the lake, as aforesaid, between that lake, called the lake of Dem-

bea, on the north side, and another small lake, which seems formerly to have been part of the great one, and is called Court-ohha; on the south is the village of Derdera, and the church of St. Michael. Here was to be the scene of action; as soon as Michael advanced to Derdera, Guscho and Powuffen were to close him behind on the north; Fasil, from Maitsha, was to appear on his front from the south, whilst, between Court-ohha and the lake, in the midst of these three armies, Michael was to lose his liberty or his life. The secret was profoundly kept, though known by many; but every one was employed in preparations for the campaign on the king's part, and no suspicion entertained, for nothing costs an Abyssinian less than to dissemble.

It had been agreed by Guscho and Powuffen before parting, in order to deceive Michael, that, should Fasil retire from Burè at their approach, and pass the Nile into his own country, the King, Ras Michael, and part of the army should remain at Burè all the rainy season; that, upon the return of the fair weather, they were all again to assemble at Burè, cross the Nile into Bizamo, and lay waste the country of the Galla, that the vestige of habitation should not be seen upon it.

All this time I found myself declining in health, to which the irregularities of the last week had greatly contributed. The King and Ras had sufficiently provided tents and conveniencies for me, yet I wanted to construct for myself a tent, with a large

large slit in the roof, that I might have an opportunity of taking observations with my quadrant, without being inquieted by troublesome or curious visitors. I therefore obtained leave from the king to go to Emfras, a town about twenty miles south from Gondar, where a number of Mahometan tent-makers lived. Gulho had a house there, and a pleasant garden, which he very willingly gave me the use of, with this advice, however, which at the time I did not understand, rather to go on to Amhara with him, for I should there sooner recover my health, and be more in quiet than with the King or Michael. As the king was to pass immediately under this town, and as most of those that loaded and unloaded his tents and baggage were Mahometans, and lived at Emfras, I could not be better situated; or more at my liberty and ease, than there.

After having taken my leave of the king and the Ras, I paid the same compliment to the Iteghè at Koscam: I had not for several days been able to wait upon her, on account of the riots during the marriage, where the Ras required my attendance, and would admit of no excuse. That excellent princess endeavoured much to dissuade me from leaving Gondar. She treated the intention of going to the source of the Nile as a fantastical folly, unworthy of any man of sense or understanding, and very earnestly advised me to stay under her protection at Koscam, till I saw whether Ras Michael and the king would return, and then
take

take the first good opportunity of returning to my own country through Tigrè, the way that I came, before any evil should overtake me.

I excused myself the best I could. It was not easy to do it with any degree of conviction, to people utterly unlearned, and who knew nothing of the prejudice of ages in favour of the attempt I was engaged in. I therefore turned the discourse to professions of gratitude for benefits that I had every day received from her, and for the very great honour that she then did me, when she condescended to testify her anxiety concerning the fate of a poor unknown traveller like me, who could not possibly have any merit but what arose from her own gracious and generous sentiments, and universal charity, that extended to every object in proportion as they were helpless. "See, see, says she, how every day of our life punishes us with proofs of the perverseness and contradiction of human nature; you are come from Jerusalem, through vile Turkish governments; and hot, unwholesome climates, to see a river and a bog, no part of which you can carry away were it ever so valuable, and of which you have in your own country a thousand larger, better, and cleaner, and you take it ill when I discourage you from the pursuit of this fancy, in which you are likely to perish, without your friends at home ever hearing when or where the accident happened. While I, on the other hand, the mother of kings who have
fat

sat upon the throne of this country more than thirty years, have for my only wish, night and day, that, after giving up every thing in the world, I could be conveyed to the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, and beg alms for my subsistence all my life after, if I could only be buried in the street within sight of the gate of that temple where our blessed Saviour once lay." This was said in the most melancholy tone possible, an unusual gloom hanging upon her countenance. Her desiring me, however, to stay at Koscam, till I knew whether the king and Michael would return or not, considering the large army they were to lead to the field, and the feebleness of the so-often defeated Fasil, made me from that instant apprehend that there was something behind with which I was yet unacquainted.

Gold, and orders for cattle and provisions while at Emfras, followed this conversation with the queen; this, indeed, had never failed at other times, which, by Ayto Aylo's advice, I never more refused. Here I cannot help observing the different manner in which three people did the same thing. When I received gold from Michael, it was openly from his hand to mine, without compliment, as he paid the rest of the king's servants. When I received it from the king, it was likewise from his own hand; it was always when alone, with a fear expressed that I suffered myself to be straitened rather than ask, and that I did not levy, with sufficient severity, the money the several

ral places allotted to me were bound to pay, which, indeed, was always the case. The queen, on the other hand, from whom I received constant donations, never either produced gold herself, nor spoke of it before or after, but sent it by a servant of hers to a servant of mine, to employ it for the necessaries of my family.

I confess I left the queen very much affected with the disposition I had found her in, and, if I had been of a temper to give credit to prognostics, and a safe way had been opened through Tigrè, I should at that time, perhaps, have taken the queen's advice, and returned without seeing the fountains of the Nile, in the same manner that all the travellers of antiquity, who had ever as yet endeavoured to explore them, had been forced to do; but the prodigious bustle and preparation which I found was daily making in Gondar, and the assurances every body gave me that, safe in the middle of a victorious army, I should see, at my leisure, that famous spot, made me resume my former resolutions, awakened my ambition, and made me look upon it as a kind of treason done to my country, in which such efforts were then making for discoveries, to renounce, now it was in my power, the putting them in possession of one which had baffled the courage and perseverance of the bravest men in all ages. The pleasure, too, of herborising in an unknown country, such as Emfras was, of continuing to do so in safety, and the approaching every day to the
end

end of my wishes, chased away all those gloomy apprehensions which I imbibed from the appearance and discourse of the queen, and of which I now began to be ashamed.

Gondar, the metropolis of Abyffinia, is situated upon a hill of considerable height, the top of it nearly plain, on which the town is placed. It consists of about ten thousand families in times of peace; the houses are chiefly of clay, the roofs thatched in the form of canoes, which is always the construction within the tropical rains. On the west end of the town is the king's house, formerly a structure of considerable consequence; it was a square building, flanked with square towers; it was formerly four storeys high, and, from the top of it, had a magnificent view of all the country southward to the lake Tzana. Great part of this house is now in ruins, having been burnt at different times; but there is still ample lodging in the two lowest floors of it, the audience-chamber being above one hundred and twenty feet long.

A succession of kings have built apartments by the side of it of clay only, in the manner and fashion of their own country; for the palace itself was built by masons from India, in the time of Facilidas, and by such Abyffinians as had been instructed in architecture by the Jesuits without embracing their religion, and after remained in the country, unconnected with the expulsion of the Portuguese, during this prince's reign.

The

The palace, and all its contiguous buildings, are furrounded by a substantial stone wall thirty feet high, with battlements upon the outer wall, and a parapet roof between the outer and inner, by which you can go along the whole and look into the street. There appears to have never been any embrasures for cannon, and the four sides of this wall are above an English mile and a half in length.

The mountain, or hill, on which the town is situated, is furrounded on every side by a deep valley, which has three outlets; the one to the south to Dembea, Maitsha, and the Agows; the second to the north-west towards Sennaar, over the high mountain Debra Tzai, or the Mountain of the Sun, at the root of which Koscam, the palace of the Iteghé, is situated, and the low countries of Walkayt and Waldubba; the third is to the north to Woggora, over the high mountain Lamalmon, and so on through Tigré to the Red Sea. The river Kahha, coming from the Mountain of the Sun, or Debra Tzai, runs through the valley, and covers all the south of the town; the Angrab, falling from Woggora, furrounds it on the N N E. These rivers join at the bottom of the hill, about a quarter of a mile south of the town.

Immediately upon the bank opposite to Gondar, on the other side of the river, is a large town of Mahometans of about a thousand houses. These are all active and laborious people; great
part

part of them are employed in taking care of the king's and nobility's baggage and field equipage, both when they take the field and when they return from it. They pitch and strike their tents with surprising facility and expedition; they load and conduct the mules and the baggage, and are formed into a body under proper officers, but never suffered, nor do they chuse, to fight on either side.

Gondar, by a number of observations of the sun and stars made by day and night, in the course of three years, with an astronomical quadrant of three feet radius, and two excellent telescopes, and by a mean of all their small differences, is in lat. $12^{\circ} 34' 30''$; and by many observations of the satellites of Jupiter, especially the first, both in their immersions and emersions during that period, I concluded its longitude to be $37^{\circ} 33' 0''$ east from the meridian of Greenwich.

It was the 4th of April 1770, at eight o'clock in the morning, when I set out from Gondar. We passed the Kahha, and the Mahometan town, and, about ten in the morning, we came to a considerable river called the Mogetch, which runs in a deep, rugged bed of flakey blue stones. We crossed it upon a very solid, good bridge of four arches, a convenience seldom to be met with in passing Abyssinian rivers, but very necessary on this, as, contrary to most of their streams, which become dry, or stand in pools, on the approach of the sun, the Mogetch runs constantly, by reason

son that its sources are in the highest hills of Woggora, where clouds break plentifully at all seasons of the year. In the rainy months it rolls a prodigious quantity of water into the lake Tzana, and would be absolutely unpassable to people bringing provision to the market, were it not for this bridge built by Facilidas; yet it is not judiciously placed, being close to the mountain's foot, in the face of a torrent, where it runs strongest, and carries along with it stones of a prodigious size, which luckily, as yet, have injured no part of the bridge. The water of the river Mogetch is not wholesome, probably from the minerals, or stony particles it carries along with it, and the slatey strata over which it runs. We have many rivers of this quality in the Alps, especially between mount Cenis and Grenoble.

Delivered now from the strait and rugged country on the banks of the Mogetch, we entered into a very extensive plain, bounded on the east side by the mountains, and on the west by the large lake of Dembea, otherwise called the lake Tzana, or Bahar Tzana, the Sea of Tzana, which geographers have corrupted into the word Barcena. Rejoiced at last that I had elbow-room, I began the most laborious search for shrubs and herbs all over the plain, my servants on one side and I on the other, searching the country on each side of the road. It appeared to our warm imaginations, that the neighbourhood of such a lake, in so remote a part of the world, ought infallibly
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to produce something perfectly beautiful, or altogether new. In this, however, we were disappointed, as indeed we always were in meadows, and where grass grew so exuberantly as it did all over this plain.

At eleven o'clock we crossed the river Tedda; here the road divides: that branch to the east leads to Wechnè, in the wild, uncultivated territory of Belessen, famous for no production but that of honey.

We continued along the other branch of the road, which led south to Emfras. One mile distant on our left is the church of St. George. About one o'clock we halted at the church Zingetch Mariam; and a few minutes after, we passed the river Gomara, a considerable stream rising in Belessen, which stands in pools during the dry weather, but had now begun to run; its course is N.E. and S.W. across the plain, after which it falls into the lake Tzana.

At two we halted at Correva, a small village, beautifully situated on a gently-rising ground, through which the road passes in view of the lake, and then again divides; one branch continuing south to Emfras, and so on to Foggora and Dara; the other to Mitraha, two small islands in the lake, lying S.W. from this at the distance of about four hours' journey. The road from Correva to Emfras, for the first hour, is all in the plain; for the second, along the gentle slope of a mountain of no considerable height; and the remainder is upon a perfect flat, or along the lake Tzana.

The 5th of April, at five in the morning, we left our present station at Correva, where, though we had employed several hours in the search, we found very little remarkable of either plants or trees, being mostly of the kind we had already seen. We continued our road chiefly to the south, through the same sort of country, till we came to the foot of a mountain, or rather a hill, covered with bushes and thorny trees, chiefly the common acacia, but of no size, and seeming not to thrive. I pitched my tent here to search what that cover would produce. There was a great quantity of hares, which I could make no use of, the Abyssinians holding them in abhorrence, as thinking them unclean; but, to make amends, I found great store of Guinea fowls, of the common grey kind we have in Europe, of which I shot, in a little time, above a score; and these, being perfectly lawful food, proved a very agreeable variety from the raw beef, butter, and honey, which we had lived upon hitherto, and which was to be our diet (it is not an unpleasant one, at least a part of it) till we reached Emfras.

At eight in the morning I passed through Tangouri, a considerable village. About a hundred yards on the right from this we have a finer prospect of the lake than even from Correva itself. This village is chiefly inhabited by Mahometans, whose occupation it is to go in caravans far to the south, on the other side of the Nile, through the several districts of Galla, to whom they carry
beads

beads and large needles, cohol, or stibium, myrrh, coarse cloths made in Begemder, and pieces of blue cotton cloths from Surat, called Marowti. They are generally nearly a year absent, and bring in return slaves, civet, wax, hides, and cardomum in large beautiful pods; they bring likewise a great quantity of ginger, but from places farther south, nearer Narea. It appears to me to be a poor trade, as far as I could judge of it, considering the loss of time employed in it, the many accidents, extortions, and robberies these merchants meet with. Whether it would be ever worth while to follow it on another footing, and another government, is what I am not qualified enough to say.

On the left of Tangouri, divided from it by a plain of about a mile in breadth, stands a high rock called Amba Mariam, with a church upon the very summit of it. There is no possibility of climbing this rock but at one place, and there it is very difficult and rugged; here the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages retreat upon any sudden alarm or inroad of an enemy.

At nine o'clock, after passing a plain, with the lake Tzana all the way on our right, in length about three miles, we came to the banks of the river Gorno, a small but clear stream; it rises near Wechnè, and has a bridge of one arch over it about half a mile above the ford. Its course is north and south nearly, and loses itself in the lake between Mitraha and Lamguè. A mile farther
we

we arrived at Emfras, after a very pleasant, though not interesting excursion.

The town is situated on a steep hill, and the way up to it is almost perpendicular like the ascent of a ladder. The houses are all placed about the middle of the hill, fronting the west, in number about 300. Above these houses are gardens, or rather fields, full of trees and bushes, without any sort of order, up to the very top. Emfras commands a view of the whole lake, and part of the country on the other side. It was once a royal residence. On a small hill is a house of Hatzé Hannes, in form of a square tower, now going fast to ruin.

Emfras is in lat. $12^{\circ} 12' 38''$ N. and long. $37^{\circ} 38' 30''$ E. of the meridian of Greenwich. The distances and directions of this journey from Gondar were carefully observed by a compass, and computed by a watch of Ellicot's, after which these situations were checked by astronomical observations of latitude and longitude in every way that they could be taken, and it was very seldom in a day's journey that we erred a mile in our computation.

The lake of Tzana is by much the largest expanse of water known in that country. Its extent, however, has been greatly exaggerated. Its greatest breadth is from Dingleber to Lamguè, which, in a line nearly east and west, is 35 miles; but it decreases greatly at each extremity, where
it

it is not sometimes above ten miles broad. Its greatest length is from Bab Baha to a little S W. and by W. of that part, where the Nile, after having crossed the end of it by a current always visible, turns towards Dara in the territory of Alata, which is 49 miles from north to south, and which extent this lake has in length. In the dry months, from October to March, the lake shrinks greatly in size; but after that all those rivers are full which are on every side of it, and fall into the lake, like radii drawn to a center, then it swells, and extends itself into the plain country, and has of course a much larger surface.

There are forty-five inhabited islands in the lake, if you believe the Abyssinians, who, in every thing, are very great liars. I conceive the number may be about eleven: the principal is Dek, or Daka, or Daga *, nearly in the middle of the lake; its true extent I cannot specify, never having been there. Besides Dek, the other islands are Halimoon, nearer Gondar; Briguida, nearer Gorgora, and still farther in Galila. All these islands were formerly used as prisons for the great people, or for a voluntary retreat, on account of some disgust or great misfortune, or as places of security to deposit their valuable effects during troublesome times. When I was in Abyssinia, a few weeks after what I have been relating,

* It signifies the hill, or high ground.

1300 ounces of gold, confided by the queen to Welleta Christos, her governor of Dek, a man of extraordinary sanctity, who had fasted for forty years, was stolen away by that priest, who fled and hid himself; nor would the queen ever suffer him to be searched after or apprehended.

C H A P. III.

*The King encamps at Lamgué—Transactions there
—Passes the Nile, and encamps at Derdera—The
Author follows the King.*

ON the 12th of May we heard the king had marched to Tedda. Messengers from Begemder, and from Gushe of Amhara, had been constantly passing to and from his majesty, pressing Ras Michael to take the field as soon as possible, to prevent the utter destruction of the Agows, which Fasil every day was striving to accomplish. They put him, moreover, in mind, that the rains were begun; that, in Fasil's country, they were already sufficient to swell the many rivers they had to pass before they arrived at Burè, they desired him to reflect, that, with the armies they were bringing to his assistance, it was more necessary to save time than stay for a number of troops; lastly, that it was absolutely useless to wait for any reinforcement from Tigrè, but that he should rather march by Emfras, Foggora, and Dara, cross the Nile where it comes out of the lake; while they, with their united armies, passed at the bridge near the second cataract, sixteen miles be-

low, burnt and laid waste Woodage, Afahel's country, and joined him at Derdera, between Courtohha and the lake. This was precisely what Ras Michael himself had planned; it embraced the whole country of his enemy, and made his scheme of vengeance complete; hitherto not a word had transpired that could raise the smallest suspicion of treachery.

The 13th, by day-break, Netcho, Fit-Auraris to Ras Michael, passed in great haste below the town towards Foggora. The King had made a forced march from Tedda, and was that night to encamp at a house of Gusfo's, near Lamguè. This was great expedition, and sufficiently marked the eagerness with which it was undertaken. The effects of the approach of the army were soon seen. Every one hid what was best in his house, or fled to the mountains with it. Emfras in a few hours was left quite empty: Ras Michael, advancing at the head of an army, spread as much terror as would the approach of the day of judgment. It was then

————— Destruction in a monarch's voice
Cried havock, and let slip the dogs of war.

For, strict and just as he was in time of peace, or in preserving the police, the security of the ways, and the poor from the tyranny of the rich, he was most licentious and cruel the moment he took the field, especially if that country which he entered had

had ever shewn the least tincture of enmity against him.

About 11 o'clock in the morning the king's Fit-Auraris passed. He was a near relation of Ayamico, one of the chiefs of the Agows who was a relation of the king, as I have before mentioned, and slain by Fasil at the battle of Banja. With him I had contracted a great degree of friendship; he had about 50 horse and 200 foot: as he passed at several places he made proclamation in name of the king, That nobody should leave their houses, but remain quiet in them without fear, and that every house found empty should be burnt. He sent a servant as he passed, telling me the king was that night to lie at Lamguè, and desiring me to send him what spirits I could spare, which I accordingly did, upon his providing a man who could protect the houses adjoining mine from the robbery and the violence of which the inhabitants were in hourly fear.

About the close of the evening we heard the king's kettle-drums. Forty-five of these instruments constantly go before him, beating all the way while he is on his march. The Mahometan town near the water was plundered in a minute; but the inhabitants had long before removed every thing valuable. Twenty different parties of stragglers came up the hill to do the same by Emfras. Some of the inhabitants were known, others not so, but their houses had nothing in them; at last these plunderers all united in mine, demanding
meat

meat and drink, and all sort of accommodation. Our friend, left with us by the Fit-Auraris, resisted as much as one man could do with sticks and whips, and it was a scuffle till mid-night; at last, having cleared ourselves of them, luckily without their setting fire to the town, we remained quiet for the rest of the night.

On the 14th, at day-break, I mounted my horse, with all my men-servants, leaving the women-servants and an old man to take care of the house. It was very unsafe to travel in such company at such an hour. We crossed the river Arno, a little below Emfras, before we got into the plain; after which we went at a smart gallop, and arrived at Langué between eight and nine o'clock.

Early as it was, the king was then in council, and Ras Michael, who had his advisers assembled also in his tent, had just left it to go to the king's. There was about 500 yards between their tents, and a free avenue is constantly left, in which it is a crime to stand, or even to cross, unless for messengers sent from the one to the other. The old general dismounted at the door of the tent; and though I saw he perceived us, and was always at other times most courteous, he passed us without taking the least notice, and entered the tent of the king.

Although my place in the household gave me free access to wherever the king was, I did not choose, at that time, to enter the back tent, and
place

place myself behind his chair, as I might have done; I rather thought it better to go to the tent of Ozoro Esther, where I was sure at least of getting a good breakfast: Nor was I disappointed. As soon as I shewed myself at the door of the tent of that princess, who was lying upon a sofa, the moment she cast her eyes upon me, she cried out, There is Yagoube! there is the man I wanted! The tent was cleared of all but her women, and she then began to enumerate several complaints which she thought, before the end of the campaign, would carry her to her grave. It was easy to see they were of the slightest kind, though it would not have been agreeable to have told her so, for she loved to be thought ill, to be attended, and flattered; she was, however, in these circumstances, so perfectly good, so conversable, so elegant in all her manners, that her physician would have been tempted to wish never to see her well.

She was then with child by Ras Michael; and the late festival, upon her niece's marriage with Powussen of Begemder, had been much too hard for her constitution, always weak and delicate since her first misfortunes, and the death of Mariam Barea. After giving her my advice, and directing her women how to administer what I was to send her, the doors of the tent were thrown open; all our friends came flocking round us, when we presently saw that the interval employed in consultation had not been spent uselessly, for a most abundant breakfast was produced in wooden
platters

platters upon the carpet. There were excellent stewed fowls, but so inflamed with Cayenne pepper as almost to blister the mouth; fowls dressed with boiled wheat, just once broken in the middle, in the manner they are prepared in India, with rice called *pillaw*, this, too, abundantly charged with pepper; Guinea hens, roasted hard without butter, or any sort of sauce, very white, but as tough as leather; above all, the never-failing *brind*, for so they call the collops of raw beef, without which nobody could have been satisfied; but, what was more agreeable to me, a large quantity of wheat bread, of Dembea flour, equal in all its qualities to the best in London or Paris.

The Abyssinians say, you must plant first and then water; nobody, therefore, drinks till they have finished eating; after this the glass went cheerfully about; there was excellent red wine, but strong, of the nature of cote-roti, brought from Karoota, which is the wine country, about six miles south-east from the place where we then were; good new brandy, honey-wine, or hydromel, and a species of beer called Bouza, both of which were fermented with herbs, or leaves of trees, and made very heady; they are disagreeable liquors to strangers. Our kind landlady, who never had quitted her sofa, pressed about the glass in the very briskest manner, reminding us that our time was short, and that the drum would presently give the signal for striking the tents. For my part, this weighed exceedingly with me
the

the contrary way to her intentions, for I began to fear I should not be able to go home, and I was not prepared to go on with the army; besides, it was indispensably necessary to see both the king and Ras Michael, and that I by no means chose to do when my presence of mind had left me; I therefore made my apology to Ozoro Esther, by a message delivered by one of her women, and slipped out of the tent to wait upon the king.

I thought to put on my most sedate appearance, that none of my companions in the king's tent should see that I was affected with liquor; tho' intoxication in Abyssinia is neither uncommon nor a reproach, when you are not engaged in business or attendance. I therefore went on as composedly as possible, without recollecting that I had already advanced near a hundred yards, walking on that forbidden precinct or avenue between the king's tent and Ras Michael's, where nobody interrupted me. The ease with which I proceeded, among such a crowd and bustle, soon brought my transgression to my mind, and I hurried out of the forbidden place in an instant.

I met several of my acquaintance, who accompanied me to the king's tent. It was now noon; a plentiful dinner or breakfast was waiting, which I had absolutely refused to partake of till I had seen the king. Thinking all was a secret that had passed at Ozoro Esther's, I lifted the curtain behind the king's chair, and coming round till nearly opposite to him, I was about to perform the usual
prof-

prostration, when in the very instant the young prince George, who was standing opposite to me on the king his brother's right hand, stepped forward and laid his hand across my breast as if to prevent me from kneeling; then turning to the king, who was sitting as usual in his chair in the alcove, Sir, says he, before you allow Yagoube to kneel, you should first provide two men to lift him up again, for Ozoro Esther has given him so much wine that he will never be able to do it himself.

Though it was almost impossible to avoid laughing, it was visible the king constrained himself, and was not pleased. The drink had really this good effect, that it made me less abashed than I otherwise should have been at this unexpected folly of the young prince. I was, however, somewhat disconcerted, and made my prostration perhaps less gracefully than at another time, and this raised the merriment of those in waiting, as attributing it to intoxication. Upon rising, the king most graciously stretched out his hand for me to kiss. While I was holding his hand, he said to his brother, coldly, Surely if you thought him drunk, you must have expected a reply; in that case, it would have been more prudent in you, and more civil, not to have made your observation.

The prince was much abashed. I hastened across the carpet, and took both his hands and kissed them; the laughers did not seem much at
their

their ease, especially when I turned and stood before the king. He was kind, sensible, composed, and condescending; he complained that I had abandoned him; asked if I had been well used at Emfras, and doubted that I had wanted every thing; but I sent you nothing on purpose, says he, because you said fasting would do you good after too much feasting at Gondar, and I knew that hunger would bring you soon back again to us. If your majesty, said I, takes the prince's word, I have been carousing to-day in your camp more than ever I did at Gondar; and, I do assure your majesty, prince George's reflections were not without foundation.

Come, come, says the king, Georgis is your firm and fast friend, and so he ought; he owes it to you that he is so able a horseman and so good a marksman, without which he could never be more than a common soldier. He has commanded a division of the army to-day—"Of 500 horse, cries out the prince in extacy; and, when the king my brother to-morrow leads the van, you shall be my Fit-Auraris, if you please, when we pass the Nile, and with my party I shall scour Maitsha." I should be very unhappy, prince, said I, to have a charge of that importance, for which I know myself to be totally unqualified; there are many brave men who have a title to that office, and who will fill it with honour to themselves and safety to your person. So you will not trust yourself, says the prince, with me and my
party

party when we shall cross the Nile? Are you angry with me, Yagoube, or are you afraid of Woodage Afahel? Were you in earnest, prince, in what you now say, replied I, you suppose two things, both greater reproaches than that of being overtaken with wine. Assure yourself I am, and always shall be, your most affectionate and most faithful servant; and that I shall think it an honour to follow you in Maitsha, or elsewhere, even as a common horseman, though, instead of one, there were in it ten thousand Woodage Afahels. O ho! says the king, then you are all friends; and I must tell you one thing, Georgis is more drunk with the thoughts of his command to-day than any foldier in my camp will be to-night with bouza. And this, indeed, seemed to be the case, for he was else a prince rather reserved and sparing of words, especially before his brother.

Tell me, Yagoube, continues the king, and tell me truly—at that very instant came in a messenger from Ras Michael, who, going round the chair without saluting, spoke to the king, upon which the room was cleared; but I after learned, that news were received from Begemder, that Powuffen and his troops were ready to march, but that two of Gussho's nephews had rebelled, whom it had taken some time to subdue; that another messenger was left behind, but had fallen sick at Aringo, who, however, would come forward as soon as possible with his master's message, and would be probably at the camp that night. He brought

brought also as undoubted intelligence, that Fafil, upon hearing Ras Michael's march, was preparing to repass the Nile into the country of the Galla. This occasioned very great doubts, because dispatches had arrived from Nanna Georgis's son, the day before at Tedda, which declared that Fafil had decamped from Buré that very day the messenger came away, advancing northward towards Gondar, but with what intention he could not say; and this was well known to be intelligence that might be strictly and certainly relied upon.

On the 15th, the king decamped early in the morning, and, as prince George had said the night before, led the van in person; a flattering mark of confidence that Ras Michael had put in him now for the first time, of which the king was very sensible. The Ras, however, had given him a dry nurse*, as it is called, in Billetana Gueta Welleta Michael, an old and approved officer, trained to war from his infancy, and surrounded with the most tried of the troops of Tigré. The king halted at the river Gomara, but advanced that same night to the passage where the Nile comes out of the lake Tzana, and resumes again the appearance of a river.

The king remained the 15th and 16th encamped upon the Nile. Several things that should have given umbrage, and begot suspicion, happened while they were in this situation. Aylo, gover-

* Maguzet.

nor of Gojam, had been summoned to assist Ras Michael when Powuffen and Gulho should march to join him with their forces of Begemder and Amhara, and his mother Ozoro Wellela Israel, then at Gondar, had promised he should not fail. This lady was younger sister to Ozoro Esther; both were daughters of the Iteghé. She was as beautiful as Ozoro Esther, but very much her inferior in behaviour, character, and conduct: she had refused the old Ras, who asked her in marriage before he was called from Tigrè to Gondar, and a mortal hatred had followed her refusal. It was therefore reported, that he was heard to say, he would order the eyes of Wellela Israel to be pulled out, if Aylo her son did not join him. It must have been a man such as Ras Michael that could form such a resolution, for Wellela Israel's eyes were most captivating. She was then in the camp with her sister.

A single small tent had appeared the evening of the 15th on the other side of the Nile, and on the morning of the 16th, Wellela Israel and the tent were missing: she boldly made her escape in the night. The tent had probably concealed her son Aylo, or some of his friends, to show her the passage; for the Nile there was both broad and deep, rolling along a prodigious mass of water, with large, black, slippery stones at the bottom. It was therefore a very arduous, bold undertaking for soldiers and men accustomed to pass rivers in the day time; but for a woman, and in the night too,

too, with all the hurry that the fear of being intercepted must have occasioned, it was so extraordinary as to exceed all belief. But she was conducted by an intrepid leader, for with her deserted Ayto Engedan son of Kafmati Eshté, and consequently nephew to Ozoro Wellela Israel; but their own inclinations had given them still a nearer relation than the degree received from their parents, or decency should have permitted. All the camp had trembled for Wellela Israel; and every one now rejoiced that so bold an attempt had been attended with the success it merited. It was necessary, however, to dissemble before Michael, who, intent upon avenging the Agows against Fafil, carried his reflections at that time no further; for Aylo's not coming was attributed to the influence of Fafil, whose government of Damot joins Gojam, and it was even said, that Wellela Israel, his mother, had been the occasion of this, from her hatred to Michael and her attachment to Fafil; the first cause was sufficiently apparent, the last had formerly been no less so.

On the 17th, after sun-rise, the king passed the Nile, and encamped at a small village on the other side, called Tfoomwa, where his Fit-Auraris had taken post early in the morning. I have often mentioned this officer without explanation, and perhaps it may now be right to state his duty. The Fit-Auraris is an officer depending immediately upon the commander in chief, and corresponding with him directly, without receiving orders

ders from any other person. He is always one of the bravest, most robust, and most experienced men in the service: he knows, with the utmost exactness, the distance of places, the depth of rivers, the state of the fords, the thickness of the woods, and the extent of them; in a word, the whole face of the country in detail. His party is always adapted to the country in which the war is; sometimes it is entirely composed of horse, sometimes of foot, but generally of a mixture of both. He has the management of the intelligence and direction of the spies. He is likewise limited to no number of troops; sometimes he has 100 men, sometimes 200. In time of real danger he has generally about 300, all picked from the whole army at his pleasure; he had not now about 50 horse, as it was not yet thought to be the time of real business or danger.

As the post of Fit-Auraris is a place of great trust, so it is endowed with proportionable emoluments. The king's Fit-Auraris has territories assigned him in every province that he ever passes through, so has that of the Ras, if he commands in chief. Every governor of a province has also an officer of this name, who has a revenue allowed him within his own province. It is a place of great fatigue. Their post is at different distances from the van of the army, according to the circumstances of the war; sometimes a day's march, sometimes four or six hours. As he passes on he fixes a lance, with a flag upon it, in the place
where

where the king's tent is to be pitched that night, or where he is to halt that day. He has couriers, or light runners, through which he constantly corresponds with the army; whenever he sees the enemy, he sends immediate advice, and falls back himself, or advances farther, according as his orders are.

From Tfoomwa the king marched on, a short day's march, to Derdera, and encamped near the church of St. Michael. Derdera, was a collection of small villages, between the lake Dembea and Court-ohha, where, it will be remembered, the agreement was the confederates should inclose Michael, and give him battle; but he had now lost all patience, as there was no appearance of either Gusho or Powussen; and being, besides, in an enemy's country, he began to proceed in his usual manner, by giving orders to lay waste the whole adjacent territory with fire and sword. The whole line of march, two days journey in breadth from the lake, was set on fire; the people who could not escape were slain, and every wanton barbarity permitted.

The king's passage of the Nile was the signal given for me to set out to join him. It was the 18th of May, at noon, I left Emfras, my course being southward whilst in the plain of Mitraha. At three o'clock we entered among a few hills of no consideration, and, soon after, began to coast close along the side of the lake Tzana. We saw this day a great number of hippopotami; some

swimming in the lake at a small distance, some rising from feeding on the high grass in the meadows, and walking, seemingly at great leisure, till they plunged themselves out of sight. They are exceeding cautious and shy while on land, and not to be approached near enough to do execution with the best rifle-gun. At four in the afternoon we halted, and passed the night at Lamgué, a village situated a few paces from the side of the lake.

On the 19th of May we left Lamgué about six in the morning, our course south and by west, and at eight we found ourselves in the middle of twenty five or thirty villages called Nabca, stretching for the length of seven or eight miles; a few minutes afterwards we came to the river Reb, which falls into the lake a little north-west of the place where we now were. Close by where the Reb joins the lake is a small village of Pagans, called Waito, who live quite separate from the Abyfinians, and are held by them in utter abhorrence, so that to touch them, or any thing that belongs to them, makes a man unclean all that day till the evening, separates him from his family and friends, and excludes him from the church and all divine service, till he is washed and purified on the following day. Part of this aversion is certainly owing to their manner of feeding; for their only profession is killing the crocodile and hippopotamus, which they make their daily sustenance. They have a most abominable stench, are exceedingly wan, or ill-coloured, very lean, and die often,

often, as is said, of the lousy disease. There are, indeed, no crocodiles in the lake Tzana, owing, as it is said, to the cataracts, which they cannot get up. However, as they are amphibious animals, and walk very well on shore, I think they might surmount this difficulty as easily as the hippopotamus; I rather think the cause is the coldness of the water and climate, which does not agree with the crocodile, but much with the river-horse.

The Waito speak a language radically different from any of those in Abyssinia; but though I have often endeavoured to get some insight into this, their religion, and customs, I could never so far succeed as to be able to give the public any certain information. A false account in such cases is certainly worse than no account at all. I once desired the king to order that one of them might be brought to Gondar. Two men, an old and a young one, were accordingly brought from the lake, but they would neither answer nor understand any questions; partly, I believe, through fear, partly from obstinacy. The king at this became so angry that he ordered them both to be hanged; they seemed perfectly unconcerned, and it was with some difficulty I procured their release; I never therefore made an experiment of that kind afterwards. The Abyssinians believe they are sorcerers, can bewitch with their eyes, and occasion death by their charms even at a considerable distance. It is likely, if that had been so, these two would have

tried their power upon me, of which I do not recollect to have ever been sensible.

We passed the Reb at nine o'clock in the morning. It rises high in the mountains of Begemder, and is one of those rivers that continue running the whole year, and has a tolerable ford, although it was visibly increased by rain. We continued our journey in sight of many villages till three quarters after twelve, we came to the river Gomara, where we staid in search of trees and herbs the rest of the day. At night we received a message from Ayto Adigo, Shum, or governor, of Karoota. He was an officer of confidence of the Iteghé's; had been a great friend of Mariam Barea's, one of whose vassals he was, and in his heart an inveterate enemy to Ras Michael and the new succession. Ever since the murder of Joas he had ventured to Gondar. When I first came there the Ras had given his house, as that of an outlaw, to me. Afterwards, as soon as he returned, I offered immediately to surrender it to him; but he would not by any means accept it, but asked leave to pitch his tent in one of the courts surrounded with walls, for it was a spacious building. Perhaps it was the best situation he could have chosen, for we did him great service by the means of Ozoro Esther, as he was but very ill-looking upon, and was rich enough to be considered as an object of Ras Michael's rapacity and avarice. Our neighbourhood

hood occasioned us to pass many evenings together, and we contracted a friendship, the rather because he was a servant of the Iteghè, and we were known favourites of Ozoro Esther.

C H A P. IV.

*Pass the River Gomara—Remarkable Accident there
—Arrive at Dara—Visit the great Cataract of
Alata—Leave Dara, and resume our Journey.*

ON the 20th of May, between six and seven in the morning, as Adigo was not arrived, I sent the baggage and tents that we had with us forward with Strates, a Greek, who was an avowed enemy to all learned inquiries or botanical researches. My orders were to encamp at Dara, in some convenient place near the house of Negadé Ras Mahomet. In the mean time I staid expecting Ayto Adigo's arrival; he came near eleven o'clock. As a temporary shelter from the sun, a cloak upon cross sticks was set up, instead of a tent, to save time. We sat down together to such fare as Adigo had brought along with him; it was a soldier's dinner, coarse and plentiful. Adigo told me Kasmati Ayabdar, an uncle of Gusho, had left his house the night before, accompanied by the men of Foggora, the country where we then were, of which he was governor, and had taken the high road to join the forces of Begemder.

Netcho,

Netcho, a near relation of the old queen, arrived from Kuara just as we were sitting down to dinner. He had about 50 horse and 200 foot, all bad troops, and ill armed; he was, however, a respectable, tried veteran, who having had many opportunities of becoming rich, gave the whole to his soldiers, and those of his dependents that lived with him; on which account he was extremely beloved, and it was hoped that, if the issue of this campaign was favourable, Ras Michael would make him governor of Kuara, in room of Coque Abou Barea, a man of a very different character, who had intruded himself into that province by the power of Fasil, and after maintained himself in it by open rebellion.

The mules that had hitherto carried my quadrant and telescopes being bad, I had luckily kept them behind, in hopes that either Adigo or Netcho would supply me with better; and I had now placed them upon the fresh mules I had obtained, and had not sent them on with the servants, and we were then taking a friendly glass. It was, I suppose, about noon, when we saw our servants coming back, and Strates also among the rest, stript of every thing that he had, except a cotton night-cap, which he wore on his head. The servants swam over the Gomara immediately, nor was Strates interrupted, but passed at the ford. They told us that Gusho and Powussen were in rebellion against the king, and confederated with Fasil, that they were advancing fast to cut off the

Ras's

Ras's retreat to Gondar, and that Guebra Mehedin, and Confu, Powuffen's Fit-Auraris, had fallen in with our servants; and plundered them, as belonging to the king and the Ras.

I was, for some minutes, in the utmost astonishment at this torrent of bad news. Whether the others knew more than I, it is impossible to say; dissimulation, in all ranks of these people, is as natural as breathing. Guebra Mehedin and Confu were the Iteghé's two nephews, sons of Bascha Eusebius her brother, a worthless man, and his sons no better. They were young men, however, whom I saw continually at the queen's palace, and to whom I should have gone immediately without fear, if I had known their houses had been in my way, and they happened to be near Lebec at the hot wells; notwithstanding their rank, they were of such dissipated manners, that they were of no account, but treated as castaways in the house of the queen their aunt, and never, as far as I knew, had entered into the presence of the king. I had often ate and drank with them, however, in the house of Ayto Engedan, their cousin-german, who was gone off with Welleta Israel his aunt, at the passage of the Nile as before mentioned. They had beat Strates, who was their intimate acquaintance, violently; as also two others of my servants, to make them confess in what package the gold was. They had taken from them also a large blunderbuss, given me by the Swedish consul, Brander, at Algiers; a pair of pistols, a double-

double-barrelled gun, and a Turkish sword mounted with silver, which, as there was then no prospect of their being immediately needed, were sent forward with the baggage.

Netcho and Adigo, and all present, agreed that the whole was a fiction, and that, supposing the account to be true that Begemder and Amhara were in rebellion, young, wild, and worthless people, like Guebra Mehedin and Confu, could never be those pitched upon for the respectable office of Fit-Auraris. The worst that could be, as they conceived, was, that some misunderstanding might subsist between Ras Michael and the governors above named, but Fasil was undoubtedly the enemy of them all. They imagined therefore that this disgust, if any, would be soon got over, and concluded that it was highly absurd, in any case, to attack me, as they certainly knew that the queen, Powussen, and Gusho, would be full as ill-pleased with it as the king or Ras Michael. It therefore appeared to them, as it also did to me, that these wild, young men, had taken the first surmise of a rebellion, as a pretence for robbing all that came in their way, and that I, unfortunately, had been the first.

We were in the middle of this conversation when the parties appeared. They had, perhaps, an hundred horse, and were scattered about a large plain, skirmishing, playing, pursuing one another, shrieking and hooping like so many frantic people. They stopt, however, upon coming nearer, seeing
the

the respectable figure that we made, just ready to pass the ford, which alone divided us. Our servants had neither seen Netcho nor Adigo, when they went in the morning, though they knew Adigo was expected, and these marauders hoped to have intercepted me, thinly accompanied, as they had done my baggage.

Guebra Mehedin and his brother approached nearer the banks than the rest, and a servant was sent from them, who crossed the river to us, upbraiding Ayto Adigo with protecting a Frank proscribed by the laws of their country, and also with marching to the assistance of Ras Michael, the murderer of his sovereign, offering at the same time to divide the spoil with him if he would surrender me and mine to him. Servants here, who carry messages in time of war between the contending parties, are held sacred like heralds. They are sent even with insults and defiance; but it is constantly understood that their errand protects them from suffering any harm, whether on the road, or when in words they perform these foolish, useless commissions.

Adigo and Netcho were above observing this punctilio with robbers. Some were for cutting the servant's ears off, and some for carrying him bound to Ras Michael; I begged they would let him go: and Netcho sent word by him to Guebra Mehedin to get the goods and mules he had robbed us of together, for he was coming over to share them with him. The servants having given the messenger

messenger a severe drubbing with sticks, torn the cloth from about his middle, and twisted it about his neck like a cord, in that plight sent him back to Guebra Mehedin, and we all prepared to take the ford across the river. Guebra Mehedin, who saw his servant thus disgraced returning towards him, and a considerable motion among the troops, advanced a few steps with two or three more of his company, stretching forth his hand and crying out, but still at a distance that we could not hear. He was distinguished by a red sash of silk twisted about his head. I, with my servants and attendants, first passed the river at the ford, and I had no sooner got up the bank, and stood upon firm ground, than I fired two shots at him; the one, from a Turkish rifle, seemed to have given him great apprehensions, or else to have wounded him, for, after four or five of his people had flocked about him, they galloped all off across the plain of Foggora towards Lebec.

Netcho had passed the Gomara close after me, entreating me to let him go first, but Adigo declared his resolution to go no farther. He hated Ras Michael; was a companion of Powussen and Gusso, as well as a neighbour, and wished for a revolution with all his heart. He, therefore, returned to Emfras and Karoota, and with him I sent five of my servants, desiring him to escort my quadrant, clock, and telescopes into the island of Mitraha, and deliver them to Tecla Georgis, the king's servant, governor of that island. Adigo, being

being left alone by the servants, could not be persuaded but some great treasure was hid in those boxes. He, therefore, carried them to his house, and used the servants well, but opened and examined every one of the packages. Surprised to find nothing but iron and rusty brass, he closed them again, and delivered them safely to Tecla Georgis, there to be kept for that campaign.

Delivered now from the embarrassment of my baggage by the industry of Guebra Mehedin, and of my cases and boxes by my own inclination, we set out with Netcho to take up our quarters with Negadè Ras Mahomet at Dara, where we arrived in the afternoon, having picked up one of our mules in the way, with a couple of carpets and some kitchen furniture upon it, all the rest being carried off,

The object which now first presented itself, and called our attention, was Strates in a night-cap, in other respects perfectly naked, with a long gun upon his shoulders, without powder or shot, but prancing and capering about in a great passion, and swearing a number of Greek oaths, which nobody there understood a word of but myself. This spectacle was rather diverting for some minutes ; at last Netcho, though I believe he was not over-well provided, gave him an upper cloak to wrap round him. It was not then warm, indeed, but it was not very cold. After recovering the mule, he got on between the panniers, and I advised him to put the smallest carpet about him, which

which he soon after did; he had not yet spoke a word to me from fullness.

“Strates, said I, my good friend, lay aside that long gun, for you will fall and break it, besides it hath not been charged since it was fired at Guebra Mehedin. If you carry it to strike terror, it is altogether unnecessary; for, if we had dressed you as you are now accoutred, when we sent you forward with the baggage to Dara, there is not a thief in all Begemder would have ventured to come near you.” He looked at me with a countenance full of anger and contempt, though he said nothing; but, in Greek, pronounced anathemas against the father of Guebra Mehedin, according to the Greek form of cursing. “Curse himself and his brother, said I, and not his father, for he has been dead these twenty years.”—“I will curse whom I please, says he, in a great passion, I curse his father, himself, and his brother, the Ras, and the king, and every body that has brought me into such a scrape as I have been to-day. I have been stripped naked, and within an inch of having my throat cut, besides being gelded; and well may you laugh now at the figure I make. If you had seen those damned crooked knives, with their black hands, all begging, as if it had been for charity, to be allowed to do my business, you would have been glad for my making no worse figure to-night than I do with this carpet upon my head.”

“My

“ My dear Strates, said I, it is the fortune of war, and many princes and great men, who, at this moment I am speaking to you, live in the enjoyment of every thing they can desire, before a month expires, perhaps, will be stretched on the cold ground, a prey to the birds and wild beasts of the field, without so much as a carpet to cover them such as you have. You as yet are only frightened; though, it is true, a man may be as well killed as frightened to death.” “ Sir, says he, in a violent rage, that I deny, it is not the same? a man that is killed feels no more, but he that is frightened to death, *as I have been to-day*, suffers ten thousand times more than if he had been killed outright.”—“ Well, said I, Strates, I will not dispute with you; I believe they suffer much the same after they are dead; but you, I thank God, have only lost your cloaths, and you are now most comfortably, though not ornamentally, wrapped up in my carpet; as soon as we get to Dara, you shall be dressed from head to foot, by Negadé Ras Mahomet, at the expence of the king, in better cloaths than you ever wore in your life, at least since I knew you; only give me your gun till your passion is allayed; you know it is a valuable one which I never quit.”

He then gave me the gun suddenly enough; and I continued, “ I will this very night present you with one of the handsomest Turkish fashies that Mahomet has to sell. I saw him in the king's house, with many new ones that he had procured,
a little

a little before I went to Emfras." I cannot pretend to say whether his visage cleared up, for he was still perfectly hid with the carpet, as it began to grow cool as well as dark; but the sight of the lights in the houses of Dara, and the promise of the new cloaths and the fash, had very much softened his voice and expressions.

"Sir, says he, bringing his mule close up to mine, now, *you are not in a passion*, one may speak to you. Do you not think that it is tempting Providence to come so far from your own country to seek these d—n'd weeds and flowers, at the risk of having your throat cut every hour of the day, and, what is *worse*, my throat cut too, and of being gelded into the bargain? Are there no weeds, and bogs, and rivers in your own country? what have you to do with that d—n'd Nile, where he rises, or whether he rises at all, or not? What will all those trees and branches do for you when these horrid blacks have done your business, as they were near doing mine? He then made a sign towards his girdle with his fingers, which made me understand what he meant—" Nile, says he, curse upon his father's head the day that he was born."

"Strates, replied I gravely, he has no father, and was never born. *Fertur sine teste creatus*, says the poet."—"There's your Latin again; the poet is an ass and a blockhead, let him be who he will, continued Strates; and I do maintain, whether you be angry or not, that at Stanchio and

Scio there are finer trees than ever you saw, or will see in Abyssinia. There is a tree, says he, that fifty men like you, spreading all your hands round about, would not be able to grasp it. Nay, it is not a tree, it is but half a tree; it is as old, I believe, as Methuselah: Did you ever see it?"—"I tell you, friend Strates, said I, I never was at Scio in my life, and, therefore, could not see it."—"Nor at Stanchio?"—"Yes, I have been at Stanchio, and have seen the large plane-tree there. I believe it may be about eighteen or twenty feet in circumference."—"Galen and Hippocrates lived, adds he, there together, 2000 years before our Saviour: Did you ever hear that?"—"I have read, said I, Strates, that, about 500 years before Christ, Hippocrates did live there; but Galen was not born till 200 years after Christ. I do not recollect if he was ever at Stanchio; but am sure he never lived there with Hippocrates."

Strates was in the middle of a declaration, that those were all falsehoods of Latins and Papists; and we were ascending, composedly enough, through a narrow, rocky road, thick covered with high trees and bushes, when, just before our entrance into the village of Dara, a gun was fired, and the ball distinctly heard passing through the leaves among the branches. This occasioned a great alarm to our disputant, who immediately supposed that Guebra Mehedin, and all his robbers, were there expressly waiting for us; nor was he the only person that felt uneasily. Netcho, myself,

and the generality of his officers, thought this was more than probable ; we all therefore dismounted, loaded our fire-arms, halted till our stragglers came up, and consulted what we were to do.

Strates, though tired and naked, found it was better to go back under his carpet, and, if possible, overtake Ayto Adigo, than take possession of his new cloaths from Negadé Ras Mahomet, with the risk of meeting Guebra Mehedin there. In vain I remonstrated to him, that he, of all others, had nothing to lose but Netcho's old cloak and the carpet. His fears, however, made him think otherwise, nor could he banish his apprehensions of the crooked knives, and, what he called, *the operation*. Netcho having ordered and conversed with his men in his own language, which I did not understand, said after, with great composure and firm tone of voice, 'That he had come to lodge in the market-place of Dara that night, and would not be put out of his quarters by boys of the character of Mehedin and Confu ; that, in his present circumstances, with the few troops he had, he did not seek to fight, but even with this force, such as it was, if attacked, he would not decline it.—Whatever country, or whatever distance of time and place heroes live at, their hearts are always in unison, and speak the same language on similar and great occasions. There old Netcho, without having ever heard of Shakespeare, repeated the very words that, 300 years ago, our

great King Henry the V. did before the battle of Agincourt:—

The sum of all my answer is but this,
We would not seek a battle as we are ;
Yet, as we are, we say we will not shun it.
So tell your master———

SHAKESPEARE.

We had advanced but a few paces, before two of the town came to us ; the noise of our approach had been heard, and all the dogs had been barking for half an hour. Soon after, arrived a son of Negadé Ras Mahomet, who assured us all was in peace ; that they had been expecting us and Ayto Adigo with us ; that he heard nothing of Guebra Mehedin, only that he had retreated with great precipitation homewards across the plain, as they apprehended, from fear of the approach of our party. He had, indeed, for some days, been guilty of great irregularities ; had slain two men, wounded the son of Mahomet, the Shum, or chief of Alata, in attempting to take from him the revenue due from that territory to the king ; after which they had been beat back by Mahomet without their booty, and nothing more was known of them.

This brought us to Negadè Ras Mahomet's house, who killed a cow for Netcho, or rather allowed him to kill one for himself ; for it is equal to a renunciation of Christianity to eat meat when
the

the beast is slaughtered by a Mahometan. Strates, who from his infancy, in his own country, had fared on nothing else, was not so scrupulous, though he concealed it; he therefore had a very hearty supper privately with Negadè Ras Mahomet and his family, who very willingly promised to get his new cloaths ready by the next morning.

As I was myself, however, full of thoughts upon the difficulties and dangers I was already engaged in, and of the prospect of still greater before me, I had no stomach for either of their suppers, but ordered some coffee, and went to bed. After I lay down I desired Negadè Ras Mahomet to come to me, and, when we were alone, I interrogated him if he knew any thing of the rebellion in Begemder. At first he declared he did not; he laughed at the notion of Guebra Mehedin and Confu being Fit-Auraris to Gusho and Powuffen, and said, that either of these generals would hang them the first time they came into their hands. He told me, however, that Woodage Asahel had been assembling troops, and had committed some cruelties upon the king's servants in Maitsha; but this, he imagined, was at the instigation of Fasil, for he never was known to have been connected either with Powuffen or Gusho. He told me after, under the seal of secrecy, that Ras Michael had halted two days at Derdera; that, upon a message he had received from Begemder, he had broke out into violent passions against Gusho and Powuffen, calling them liars and traitors, in the

openest manner ; that a council had been held at Derdera, in presence of the king, where it was in deliberation whether the army should not turn short into Begemder, to force that province to join them ; but that it was carried, for the sake of the Agows, to send Powussen a summons to join him for the last time : that, in the mean while, they should march straight with the greatest diligence to meet Fasil, and give him battle, then return, and reduce to proper subordination both Begemder and Amhara.

This was the very worst news I could possibly receive according to the resolutions that I had then taken, for I was within about fourteen miles of the great cataract, and it was probable I never again should be so near, were it even always accessible ; to pass, therefore, without seeing it, was worse, in my own thoughts, than any danger that could threaten me.

Negadè Ras Mahomet was a sober plain man, of excellent understanding, and universal good character for truth and integrity ; and, as such, very much in the favour both of the King and Ras Michael. I therefore opened my intentions to him without reserve, desiring his advice how to manage this excursion to the cataract. “ Unless you had told me you were resolved, says he, with a grave air, though full of openness and candour, I would, in the first place, have advised you not to think of such an undertaking ; these are unsettled times ; all the country is bushy, wild, and uninhabited,

uninhabited, quite to Alata ; and though Mahomet, the Shum, is a good man, my friend and relation, and the king reposes trust in him, as he does in me, yet Alata itself is at any time but a bad, straggling place ; there are now many strangers, and wild people there, whom Mahomet has brought to his assistance, since Guebra Mehedin made the attack upon him. If, then, any thing was to befall you, what should I answer to the king and the Iteghè ? it would be said, the Turk has betrayed him ; though, God knows, I was never capable of betraying your dog, and rather would be poor all my life, than the richest man of the province by doing the like wrong, even if the bad action was never to be revealed, or known, unless to my own heart.

“ Mahomet, said I, you need not dwell on these professions ; I have lived twelve years with people of your religion, my life always in their power, and I am now in your house, in preference to being in a tent out of doors with Netcho and his Christians. I do not ask you whether I am to go or not, for that is resolved on ; and, though you are a Mahometan, and I a Christian, no religion teaches a man to do evil. We both agree in this, that God, who has protected me thus far, is capable to protect me likewise at the cataract, and further, if he has not determined otherwise, for my good ; I only ask you as a man who knows the country, to give me your best advice, how I may satisfy my curiosity in this point, with as little danger

danger, and as much expedition as possible, leaving the rest to heaven.”—“ Well, says he, I shall do so. I think, likewise, for your comfort, that, barring unforeseen accidents, you may do it at this time, without great danger. Guebra Mehedin will not come between this town and Alata, because we are all one people, and the killing two men, and wounding Mahomet’s son, makes him a *dimmenia* *. At Alata he knows the Shum is ready to receive him as he deserves, and he is himself afraid of Kasmati Ayabdar, with whom he is as deep in guilt as with us, and here he well knows he dare not venture for many reasons.”

“ Ayabdar, said I, passed the Karoota three days ago.” “ Well, well, replied Mahomet, so much the better. Ayabdar has the leprosy, and goes every year once, sometimes twice, to the hot wells at Lebec; they must pass near one another, and that is the reason Guebra Mehedin has assembled all these banditti of horse about him. He is a beggar, and a spendthrift; a fortnight ago he sent to me to borrow twenty ounces of gold. You may be sure I did not lend it him; he is too much in my debt already; and I hope Ras Michael will give you his head in your hand before winter, for the shameful action he has been guilty of to you and yours this day.

“ Woodage Asahel, said I, what say you of him?”—“ Why, you know, replied Mahomet,

* Guilty of our blood, and subject to the laws of retaliation.

nobody can inform you about his motions, as he is perpetually on horseback, and never rests night nor day ; however, he has no business on this side of the water, the rather that he must be sure Ras Michael, when he passed here, took with him all the king's money that I had in my hands. When day-light is fairly come, for we do not know the changes a night may produce in this country, take half a dozen of your servants ; I will send with you my son and four of my servants ; you will call at Alata, go down and see the cataract, but do not stay, return immediately, and, *Ullab Kerim*, God is merciful."

I thanked my kind landlord, and let him go ; but recollecting, called him again, and asked, " What shall I do with Netcho ? how shall I re-join him ? my company is too small to pass Maitsha without him."—" Sleep in peace, says he, I will provide for that. I tell you in confidence, the king's money is in my hands, and was not ready when the Ras passed ; my son is but just arrived with the last of it this evening, tired to death ; I send the money by Netcho, and my son too, with forty stout fellows well armed, who will die in your service, and not run away like those vagabond Christians, in whom you must place no confidence if danger presents itself, but immediately throw yourself among the Mahometans. Besides, there are about fifty soldiers, most of them from Tigré, Michael's men, that have been loitering here these two days. It was one of these that fired the gun just before you came, which
alarmed

alarmed Netcho; so that, when you are come back in safety from the cataract, they shall be, by that time, all on their march to the passage. My son shall mount with you; I fear the Nile will be too deep, but when once you are at Tfoomwa, you may let your mind at rest, and bid defiance to Woodage Afahel, who knows his enemy always before he engages him, and at this time will not venture to interrupt your march."

As I have mentioned the name of this person so often, it will be necessary to take notice, that he was by origin a Galla, but born at Damot, of the clan Elmana, or Denfa, two tribes settled there in the time of Yafous I. that he was the most intrepid and active partizan in his time, and had an invincible hatred to Ras Michael, nor was there any love lost betwixt them. It is impossible to conceive with what velocity he moved, sometimes with 200 horse, sometimes with half that number. He was constantly falling upon some part of Michael's army, whether marching or encamped; the blow once struck, he disappeared in a minute. When he wanted to attempt something great, he had only to summon his friends and acquaintance in the country, and he had then a little army, which dispersed as soon as the business was done. It was Ras Michael's first question to the spies; Where was Woodage Afahel last night? a question they very seldom could answer with certainty. He was in his person too tall for a good horseman, yet he was expert in this qualification by constant practice.

practice. His face was yellow, as if he had the jaundice, and much pitted with the small-pox; his eyes staring, but fiery; his nose as it were broken, his mouth large, his chin long and turned up at the end; he spoke very fast, but not much, and had a very shy, but ill-defigning look. In his character, he was avaricious, treacherous, inexorable, and cruel to a proverb; in short, he was allowed to be the most merciless robber and murderer that age had produced in all Abyssinia.

Wearied with thinking, and better reconciled to my expedition, I fell into a sound sleep. I was awakened by Strates in the morning, (the 21st of May) who, from the next room, had heard all the conversation between me and Negadé Ras, and began now to think there was no safety but in the camp of the king. I will not repeat his wise expostulations against going to the cataract. We were rather late, and I paid little regard to them. After coffee, I mounted my horse, with five servants on horseback, all resolute, active, young fellows, armed with lances in the fashion of their country. I was joined that moment by a son of Mahomet, on a good horse, armed with a short gun, and pistols at his belt, with four of his servants, Mahometans, stout men, each having his gun, and pistols at his girdle, and a sword hung over his shoulder, mounted upon four good mules, swifter and stronger than ordinary horses. We galloped all the way, and were out of fight in a short time. We then pursued our journey with diligence,

diligence, but not in a hurry; we went first to a hilly and rocky country, full of trees, mostly of unknown kinds, and all of the greatest beauty possible, having flowers of a hundred different colours and forms upon them, many of the trees were loaded with fruit, and many with both fruit and flowers. I was truly sorry to be obliged to pass them without more distinct notice; but we had no time to lose, as the distance to the cataract was not absolutely certain, and the cataract then was our only object.

After passing the plain, we came to a brisk stream which rises in Begemder, passes Alata, and throws itself into the Nile below the cataract. They told me it was called Mariam Ohha; and, a little farther, on the side of a green hill, having the rock appearing in some parts of it, stands Alata, a considerable village, with several smaller, to the south and west. Mahomet, our guide, rode immediately up to the house where he knew the governor, or Shum, resided, for fear of alarming him; but we had already been seen at a considerable distance, and Mahomet and his servants known. All the people of the village surrounded the mules directly, paying each their compliments to the master and the servants; the same was immediately observed towards us; and, as I saluted the Shum in Arabic, his own language, we speedily became acquainted. Having overshot the cataract, the noise of which we had a long time distinctly heard, I resisted every entreaty that
could

could be made to me to enter the house to refresh myself. I had imbibed part of Strates's fears about the unsettledness of the times, and all the kind invitations were to no purpose; I was, as it were, forced to comply to refresh our horses.

I happened to be upon a very steep part of the hill full of bushes; and one of the servants, dressed in the Arabian fashion, in a burnoose, and turban striped white and green, led my horse, for fear of his slipping, till it got into the path leading to the Shum's door. I heard the fellow exclaiming in Arabic, as he led the horse, "Good Lord! to see you here! Good God! to see you here!"—"I asked him who he was speaking of, and what reason he had to wonder to see me there."—"What! do you not know me!" "I said I did not."—"Why, replied he, I was several times with you at Jidda. I saw you often with Capt. Price and Capt. Scott, with the Moor Yafine, and Mahomet Gibberti. I was the man that brought your letters from Metical Aga at Mecca, and was to come over with you to Masuah, if you had gone directly there, and had not proceeded to Yemen or Arabia Felix. I was on board the Lion, with the Indian nokeda (so they call the captain of a country ship) when your little vessel, all covered with sail, passed with such briskness through the English ships, which all fired their cannon; and every body said, there is a poor man making great haste to be assassinated among those wild people in Habesh; and so we all thought.

He

He concluded, Drink! no force! Englishman! very good! G--d damn, drink!" We had just arrived, while my friend was uttering these exclamations, at the place where the Shum and the rest were standing. The man continued repeating the same words, crying as loud as he could, with an air of triumph, while I was reflecting how shameful it was for us to make these profligate expressions by frequent repetition, so easily acquired by strangers that knew nothing else of our language.

The Shum, and all about him, were in equal astonishment at seeing the man, to all appearance, in a passion, bawling out words they did not understand; but he, holding a horn in his hand, began louder than before, drink! very good! Englishman! shaking the horn in the Shum his master's face. Mahomet of Alata was a very grave, composed man; "I do declare, says he, Ali is become mad: Does any body know what he says or means?"—"That I do, said I, and will tell you by-and-bye; he is an old acquaintance of mine, and is speaking English; let us make a hasty meal, however, with any thing you have to give us."

Our horses were immediately fed; bread, honey, and butter served: Ali had no occasion to cry, drink; it went about plentifully, and I would stay no longer, but mounted my horse, thinking every minute that I tarried might be better spent at the cataract. The first thing they carried us to was the bridge, which consists of one arch of
about

about twenty-five feet broad, the extremities of which were strongly let into, and rested on the solid rock on both sides ; but fragments of the parapets remained, and the bridge itself seemed to bear the appearance of frequent repairs, and many attempts to ruin it ; otherwise, in its construction, it was exceedingly commodious. The Nile here is confined between two rocks, and runs in a deep trough, with great roaring and impetuous velocity. We were told no crocodiles were ever seen so high, and were obliged to remount the stream above half a mile before we came to the cataract, through trees and bushes of the same beautiful and delightful appearance with those we had seen near Dara.

The cataract itself was the most magnificent sight that ever I beheld. The height has been rather exaggerated. The missionaries say the fall is about sixteen ells, or fifty feet. The measuring is, indeed, very difficult, but, by the position of long sticks, and poles of different lengths, at different heights of the rock, from the water's edge, I may venture to say that it is nearer forty feet than any other measure. The river had been considerably increased by rains, and fell in one sheet of water, without any interval, above half an English mile in breadth, with a force and noise that was truly terrible, and which stunned and made me, for a time, perfectly dizzy. A thick fume, or haze, covered the fall all round, and hung over the course of the stream both
above

above and below, marking its track, though the water was not seen. The river, though swelled with rain, preserved its natural clearness, and fell, as far as I could discern, into a deep pool, or basin, in the solid rock, which was full, and in twenty different eddies to the very precipice, the stream, when it fell, seeming part of it to run back with great fury upon the rock, as well as forward in the line of its course, raising a wave, or violent ebullition, by chafing against each other.

Jerome Lobo pretends, that he has sat under the curve, or arch, made by the projectile force of the water rushing over the precipice. He says he sat calmly at the foot of it, and looking through the curve of the stream, as it was falling, saw a number of rainbows of inconceivable beauty in this extraordinary prism. This however I, without hesitation, aver to be a downright falsehood. A deep pool of water, as I mentioned, reaches to the very foot of the rock, and is in perpetual agitation. Now, allowing that there was a seat, or bench, which there is not, in the middle of the pool, I do believe it absolutely impossible, by any exertion of human strength, to have arrived at it. Although a very robust man, in the prime and vigour of life, and a hardy, practised, indefatigable swimmer, I am perfectly confident I could not have got to that seat from the shore through the quietest part of that basin. And, supposing the
friar

friar placed in his imaginary seat under the curve of that immense arch of water, he must have had a portion of firmness, more than falls to the share of ordinary men, and which is not likely to be acquired in a monastic life, to philosophise upon optics in such a situation, where every thing would seem to his dazzled eyes to be in motion, and the stream, in a noise like the loudest thunder, to make the solid rock (at least as to sense) shake to its very foundation, and threaten to tear every nerve to pieces, and to deprive one of other senses besides that of hearing. It was a most magnificent sight, that ages, added to the greatest length of human life, would not deface or eradicate from my memory; it struck me with a kind of stupor, and a total oblivion of where I was, and of every other sublunary concern. It was one of the most magnificent, stupendous sights in the creation, though degraded and vilified by the lies of a groveling, fanatic peasant.

I was awakened from one of the most profound reveries that ever I fell into, by Mahomet, and by my friend *Drink*, who now put to me a thousand impertinent questions. It was after this I measured the fall, and believe, within a few feet, it was the height I have mentioned; but I confess I could at no time in my life less promise upon precision; my reflection was suspended, or subdued, and while in sight of the
fall

fall I think I was under a temporary alienation of mind; it seemed to me as if one element had broke loose from, and become superior to all laws of subordination; that the fountains of the great deep were extraordinarily opened, and the destruction of a world was again begun by the agency of water.

It was now half an hour past one o'clock, the weather perfectly good; it had rained very little that day, but threatened a showery evening; I peremptorily refused returning back to Alata, which our landlord importuned us to. He gave us a reason that he thought would have weight with us, that he, too, had his meery, or money, to send to the king, which would be ready the next morning as early as we pleased. The mention of to-morrow morning brought all my engagements and their consequences into my mind, and made me give a flat refusal, with some degree of peevishness and ill-humour. I had soon after found, that he had otherwise made up this affair with Mahomet our guide; but being resolute, and, a moment after, taking leave of our kind Shum, we were joined by Seide his eldest son, and our *English friend Drink*, each upon a mule, with two servants on foot, his father, as he said, being unwilling to spare more people, as the whole inhabitants of Alata, their neighbours and friends, intended soon to surprise Guebra Mehedin, if a feasible opportunity offered.

Though we went briskly, it was past five before we arrived at Dara. Netcho had not stirred, and had procured another cow from Mahomet, of which all the strangers, and soldiers who remained, partook. Mahomet, I believe, out of kindness to me, had convinced them of the necessity of taking along with them the Shum of Alata's money; and Netcho well knew that those who brought any part of the revenue to Ras Michael were always received kindly; and he was not interested enough in the cause to make more haste than necessary to join the king.

Strates was completely cloathed, and received his sash upon my arrival. He feigned to be wonderfully hurt at my having left him behind in my excursion to the cataract. At supper I began to question him, for the first time, what had happened to him with Guebra Mehedin. "Sure, Strates, said I, you two were once friends; I have dined with you together many a time at Ayto Engenden's, and often seen you with him in Gondar."—"Gondar! says he, I have known him these fourteen years, when he was a child in his father Basha Eusebius's house; he was always playing amongst us at his uncle Kasmati Eshté's; he was just one of us; nay, he is not now twenty-six.

Strates proceeded—"We were crossing the plain below Dara, and not being inclined to go into the town without you, we made to a large daroo-tree,

and sat down to rest ourselves till you should come up. As the ground was somewhat elevated, we saw several horses in the bed of a torrent where there was no water running, and, when these were pulled up the bank, their masters got immediately upon them. I conceived the one with the red sash upon his head was Guebra Mehedin, and presently eight or ten naked people, armed with lances and shields, came out of the hole nearest me. I was surprised, and thought they might be robbers, and, kneeling down upon one knee, I presented the large blunderbuss at them. On this they all ran back to their hole, and fell flat on their faces; and they did well; I should have given them a confounded peppering.”—
“Certainly, said I, there is little doubt of that.”—
—“You may laugh, continued Strates, but the first thing I saw near me was Confu and Guebra Mehedin, the one with a red, the other a kind of white fillet tied round his forehead. O ho! friend, says Guebra Mehedin, where are you going? and held out his hand to me as kindly, familiarly, and cheerfully as possible. I immediately laid down my blunderbuss, and went to kiss his hand. You know they are the good old queen’s nephews; and I thought if their house was near we should have good entertainment, and some merriment that night. I then saw one of their servants lift the blunderbuss from the ground, but apparently with fear, and the rest took possession of the
mules

mules and baggage. I began to ask Guebra Mehedin what this meant? and said accidentally, *ente you!* instead of speaking it *entow*, as you know they pronounce it to great people. Without further provocation he gave me a lash with his whip across the eyes, another behind took hold of your sword that was slung upon my shoulders, and would have strangled me with the cord if I had not fallen backwards; they all began then to strip me. I was naked in a minute as I was the hour I was born, having only this night-cap; when one of them, a tall black fellow, drew a crooked knife, and proposed to pay me a compliment that has made me shudder every time I have since thought of it. I don't know what would have been the end of it, if Confu had not said, Poh! he is a *white* man, and not worth the *scarifying*: Let us seek his master, says Guebra Mehedin, he will by this have passed the Gomara; he has always plenty of gold both from the king and Iteghé, and is a real Frank, on which account it would be a sin to spare him. On this away they went skirmishing about the plain. Horsemen came to join them from all parts, and every one that passed me gave me a blow of some kind or other. None of them hurt me very much, but, no matter; I may have my turn: we shall see what figure he will make be-

fore the Iteghé some of these days, or, what is better, before Ras Michael."

"That you shall never see, says Negadé Ras Mahomet, who entered the room in the instant, for there is a man now without who informs us that Guebra Mehedin is either dead or just a-dying. A shot fired at him, by one of you at the Gomara, cut off part of his cheek-bone; the next morning he heard that Kasmati Ayabdar was going to the hot waters at Lebec with servants only, and the devil to whom he belonged would not quit him; he would persist, ill as he was, to attack Ayabdar, who having, unknown to him, brought a number of stout fellows along with him, without difficulty cut his servants to pieces. In the fray, Tecla Georgis, a servant who takes care of Ayabdar's horse, struck him over the skull with a large crooked knife like a hatchet, and left him mortally wounded on the field, whence he was carried to a church, where he is now lying a miserable spectacle, and can never recover." Strates could hold no longer. He got up and danced as if he had been frantic, sometimes singing Greek songs, at another time pronouncing ten thousand curses, which he wished might overtake him in the other world. For my part, I felt very differently, for I had much rather, considering whose nephew he was, that

that he should have lived, than to have it said that he received his first wound, not a mortal one, but intended as such, from my hand.

C H A P. V.

Pass the Nile and encamp at Tjoomwa—Arrive at Derdera—Alarm on approaching the army—Join the King at Kartagna.

ON the 22d of May we were all equally desirous to resume our journey. We set out accordingly at six o'clock in the morning, ascending some hills covered, as the former ones, with trees and shrubs, utterly unknown to me, but of inexpressible beauty, and many of extraordinary fragrance. We continued ascending about three miles, till we came to the top of the ridge within sight of the lake. As we rose, the hills became more bare and less beautiful. We afterwards descended towards the passage, partly over steep banks which had been covered with bushes, all trodden down by the army, and which had made the access to the river exceedingly slippery. Here we saw the use of Mahomet's servants, three of whom, each with a lance in one hand, holding that of his companion in the other, waded across the violent stream, sounding with the end of their lances every step they took. The river was very deep, the current, I suppose, fifty yards broader than

than it was at the cataract ; but the banks were, for a great way on each side, almost perfectly level, though much obstructed with black stones. In the middle it was very deep, and the stream smooth, so that it was apparent our horses must swim. For my part I did not like the smooth stones at the bottom, as a fall there would have been irrecoverable ; and my horse was shod with iron, which is not usual in Abyssinia. I therefore resolved to swim where I could not wade, and, wrapping my cloaths in a bundle, I gave them to a servant, who carried them over on his head. I then waded in, and found the water unexpectedly cold. Mahomet rode on a mule by my side, sometimes swimming, sometimes walking. I attempted to sound up towards the lake, and found it deeper there. I returned, therefore, being unwilling to try experiments, and, committing myself to the stream, swam to the other side, much comforted by the assurance that no crocodile passed the cataract.

The beasts having got over, the men followed much quicker ; many women, going to join the army, swam over, holding the tails of the horses, and we were all on the other side before twelve o'clock, the beasts a good deal tired with the passage, the steepness of the access to it, and still greater depth on the other side. For my part, I thought we could not have gone on to Tfoomwa, but it was carried against me. Tfoomwa is about twelve miles distant ; and I suppose it was not
much

much past three o'clock when we arrived there, which was very fortunate, as we had scarcely pitched our tents before a most terrible storm of rain, wind, and thunder overtook us. My tent was happily placed in one respect, being on a flat on the lee-side of a hill, and sheltered from the storm; but, on the other hand, the water ran so plentifully from above as quite to overflow it on the inside till a trench was dug to carry it off.

Ras Michael had burnt nothing at Tfoomwa, though there was a house of Powuffen's in the place, built by his father. But that dissembler, to prevent the worst, and carry on the farce to the uttermost, had sent many large bags of flour for the use of the King and the Ras, which were to be distributed to the army in case they wanted.

From the passage to Tfoomwa, all the country was forsaken; the houses uninhabited, the grass trodden down, and the fields without cattle. Every thing that had life and strength fled before that terrible leader, and his no less terrible army; a profound silence was in the fields around us, but no marks as yet of desolation. We kept strict watch in this solitude all that night. I took my turn till twelve, as I was the least fatigued of any. Netcho had picquets about a quarter of a mile on every side of us, with fire arms to give the alarm.

On the 23d, about three in the morning, a gun was heard on the side towards the passage. This did not much alarm us, though we all turned out. In a few minutes came Ayto Adigo, (not the
Shum

Shum of Karoota, already mentioned, who left us at the Gomara,) but a young nobleman of Begemder of great hopes, one of the gentlemen of the king's bed-chamber, and consequently my colleague. He intended to have brought four horses to the king, one of which he had drowned, or rather, as I afterwards understood, throttled in passing the Nile at the mouth of the lake; and two men, the king's servants, had perished there likewise. He came in great hurry, full of the news from Begemder, and of the particulars of the conspiracy, such as have been already stated. With Ayto Adigo came the king's cook, Sebastos, an old Greek, near seventy, who had fallen sick with fatigue. After having satisfied his inquiries, and given him what refreshment we could spare, he left Sebastos with us, and pursued his journey to the camp.

On the 24th, at our ordinary time, when the sun began to be hot, we continued our route due south, through a very plain, flat country, which, by the constant rains that now fell, began to stand in large pools, and threatened to turn all into a lake. We had hitherto lost none of our beasts of carriage, but we now were so impeded by streams, brooks, and quagmires, that we despaired of ever bringing one of them to join the camp. The horses, and beasts of burthen that carried the baggage of the army, and which had passed before us, had spoiled every ford, and we saw to-day a number of dead mules lying about the fields, the
houses

houses all reduced to ruins, and smoking like so many kilns; even the grass, or wild oats, which were grown very high, were burnt in large plots of a hundred acres together; every thing bore the marks that Ras Michael was gone before, whilst not a living creature appeared in those extensive, fruitful, and once well-inhabited plains. An awful silence reigned every where around, interrupted only at times by thunder, now become daily, and the rolling of torrents produced by local showers in the hills, which ceased with the rain, and were but the children of an hour. Amidst this universal silence that prevailed all over this scene of extensive desolation, I could not help remembering how finely Mr. Gray paints the passage of such an army, under a leader like Ras Michael!—

Confusion in his van with flight combin'd,
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind.

At Derdera we saw the church of St. Michael, the only building which, in favour of his own name, the Ras had spared. It served us then for a very convenient lodging, as much rain had fallen in the night, and the priests had all fled or been murdered. We had this evening, when it was clear, seen the mountain of Samseen. Our next stage from Derdera was Karcagna, a small village near the banks of the Jemma, about two miles from Samseen. We knew the king had resolved to burn it, and we expected to have seen the clouds

clouds of smoke arising from its ruins, but all was perfectly cool and clear, and this very much surprised us, considering the time he had to do this, and the great punctuality and expedition with which his army used to execute orders of this kind. As we advanced, we had seen a great number of dead mules and horses, and the hyænas so bold as only to leave the carcase for a moment, and snarl as if they had regretted at seeing any of us pass alive.

Since passing the Nile I found myself more than ordinarily depressed; my spirits were sunk almost to a degree of despondency, and yet nothing had happened since that period more than was expected before. This disagreeable situation of mind continued at night while I was in bed. The rashness and imprudence with which I had engaged myself in so many dangers without any necessity for so doing; the little prospect of my being ever able to extricate myself out of them, or, even if I lost my life, of the account being conveyed to my friends at home; the great and unreasonable presumption which had led me to think that, after every one that had attempted this voyage had miscarried in it, I was the only person that was to succeed; all these reflections upon my mind, when relaxed, dozing, and half oppressed with sleep, filled my imagination with what I have heard other people call the *horrors*, the most disagreeable sensation I ever was conscious of, and which I then felt for the first time. Impatient of
suffering

suffering any longer, I leaped out of bed, and went to the door of the tent, where the outward air perfectly awakened me, and restored my strength and courage. All was still, and at a distance I saw several bright fires, but lower down, and more to the right than I expected, which made me think I was mistaken in the situation of Karcagna. It was then near four in the morning of the 25th. I called up my companions, happily buried in deep sleep, as I was desirous, if possible, to join the king that day. We accordingly were three or four miles from Derdera when the sun rose; there had been little rain that night, and we found very few torrents on our way; but it was slippery, and uneasy walking, the rich soil being trodden into a consistence like paste.

About seven o'clock we entered upon the broad plain of Maitsha, and were fast leaving the lake. Here the country is, at least a great part of it, in tillage, and had been, in appearance, covered with plentiful crops, but all was cut down by the army for their horses, or trodden under foot, from carelessness or vengeance, so that a green blade could scarcely be seen. We saw a number of people this day, chiefly straggling soldiers, who, in parties of threes and fours, had been seeking, in all the bushes and concealed parts of the river, for the miserable natives, who had hid themselves thereabouts; in this they had many of them been successful. They had some of them three, some of them four women, boys and girls, who, though
Christians

Christians like themselves, they nevertheless were carrying away into slavery to sell them to the Turks for a very small price.

A little before nine we heard a gun fired that gave us some joy, as the army seemed not to be far off; a few minutes after, we heard several dropping shots, and, in less than a quarter of an hour's time, a general firing began from right to left, which ceased for an instant, and then was heard again as smart as ever, about the occasion of which we were divided in opinion.

Netcho was satisfied that Woodage Afahel, from Samseen, had fallen upon Ras Michael at Karcagna, to prevent his burning it, and that Fasil had strongly reinforced him that he might be able to retard the army's march. On the other hand, having been informed by Ayto Adigo, that news were come to Gondar that Fasil had left Buré, and that Derdera was the place agreed on by Guscho and Powussen to shut up Michael on the rear, I thought that it was Fasil, to make good his part of his promise, who had crossed the Nile at Goutto, and attacked Ras Michael before he suffered him to burn Samseen. Indeed we all agreed that both opinions were likely to be true, and that Fasil and Woodage Afahel would both attack the king at the same time. The firing continued much in the same way, rather flacker, but apparently advancing nearer us; a sure sign that our army was beaten and retreating. We, therefore, made ourselves ready, and mounted on horseback,

horseback, that we might join them. Yet it was a thing appeared to us scarcely possible, that Fasil should beat Ras Michael so easily, and with so short a resistance.

We had not gone far in the plain before we had a fight of the enemy, to our very great surprise and no small comfort. A multitude of deer, buffaloes, boars, and various other wild beasts, had been alarmed by the noise and daily advancing of the army, and gradually driven before them. The country was all overgrown with wild oats, a great many of the villages having been burnt the year before the inhabitants had abandoned them; in this shelter the wild beasts had taken up their abodes in very great numbers. When the army pointed towards Karcagna to the left, the silence and solitude on the opposite side made them turn to the right to where the Nile makes a semi-circle, the Jemma being behind them, and much overflowed. When the army, therefore, instead of marching south and by east towards Samseen, had turned their course north-west, their faces towards Gondar, they had fallen in with these innumerable herds of deer and other beasts, who, confined between the Nile, the Jemma, and the lake, had no way to return but that by which they had come. These animals, finding men in every direction in which they attempted to pass, became desperate with fear, and, not knowing what course to take, fell a prey to the troops. The soldiers, happy in an occasion of procuring animal

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mal food, presently fell to firing wherever the beasts appeared ; every loaded gun was discharged upon them, and this continued for very near an hour. A numerous flock of the largest deer met us just in the face, and seemed so desperate, that they had every appearance of running us down ; and part of them forced themselves through, regardless of us all, whilst others turned south to escape across the plain.

The king and Ras Michael were in the most violent agitation of mind : though the cause was before their eyes, yet the word went about that Woodage Afahel had attacked the army ; and this occasioned a great panic and disorder, for every body was convinced with reason that he was not far off. The firing, however, continued, the balls flew about in every direction, some few were killed, and many people and horses were hurt ; still they fired, and Ras Michael, at the door of his tent, crying, threatening, and tearing his grey locks, found, for a few minutes, the army was not under his command. At this instant, Kafmati Netcho, whose Fit-Auraris had fallen back on his front, ordered his kettle-drums, to be beat before he arrived in the king's presence ; and this being heard, without it being known generally who we were, occasioned another panic ; great part of the army believed that Powuffen and Gulho were now at hand to keep their appointment with Fasil, and that Netcho and I were his Fit-Auraris. The king ordered his tent to be pitched,

ed, his standard to be set up, his drums to beat, (the signal for encamping) and the firing immediately ceased. But it was a long while before all the army could believe that Woodage Afahel had not been engaged with some part of it that day. Happily, if near at hand, he did not lay hold of this favourable opportunity ; for I am convinced, if, just before our arrival, he had attacked Michael on the Samseen side, with 500 horse, our whole army had fled without resistance, and dispersed all over the country.

Here I left Kasmati Netcho, and was making my way towards the king's tent, when I was met by a servant of confidence of Kefla Yafous, who had that day commanded the rear in the retreat, a very experienced officer, brave even to a fault, but full of mildness and humanity, and the most sensible and affable man in the army. He sent to desire that I would come to him alone, or that I would send one of the Greeks that followed me. I promised to do so, after having answered most of the questions that he bade his servant ask of me. After this I searched for Strates and Sebastos, who had been sick upon the road.

I soon came up with them, and was more surprised than I had been for several days, to see them both lie extended on the ground ; Strates bleeding at a large wound in his forehead, speaking Greek to himself, and crying out his leg was broken, whilst he pressed it with both his hands below the knee, seemingly regardless of the gash
in

in his head, which appeared to me a very ugly one, so that I, of course, thought his leg was still worse. Sebastos was lying stretched along the ground, scarcely saying any thing, but sighing loudly. Upon my asking him whether his arm was broken? he answered feebly, that he was a dying man, and that his legs, his arms, and his ribs were broken to pieces. I could not for my life conceive how this calamity had happened so suddenly, for I had not been half an hour absent talking to Kefla Yafous's servant; and, what seemed to me still stranger, every body around them were bursting out into fits of laughter.

Ali Mahomet's servant, who was the only person that I saw concerned, upon my asking, told me that it was all owing to prince George, who had frightened their mules. I have already hinted that this prince was fond of horsemanship, and rode with saddle, bridle, and stirrups, like an Arab; and, though young, was become an excellent horseman, superior to any in Abyssinia. The manner that two Arabs salute one another, when they meet, is, the person inferior in rank, or age, presents his gun at the other, about 500 yards distance, charged with powder only; he then, keeping his gun always presented, gallops these 500 yards as fast as he can, and, being arrived close, lowers the muzzle of his gun, and pours the explosion just under the other's stirrups, or horse's belly. This they do, sometimes twenty at a time, and you would often think it was im-

possible, somebody should escape being bruised or burnt.

The prince had learned this exercise from me, and was very perfect at the performance of it. We had procured him a short gun, with a lock and flint instead of a match, and he shot not only justly, but gracefully on horseback. He had been out after the deer all the morning; and hearing that I was arrived, and seeing the two Greeks riding on their mules, he came galloping furiously with his gun presented, and, not seeing me, he fired a shot under the belly of Strates's mule, upon the ground, and wheeling as quick as lightning to the left, regardless of the mischief he had occasioned, was out of sight in a moment, before he knew the consequences.

Never was compliment worse timed or relished. Strates had two panniers upon his mule, containing two great earthen jars of hydromel for the king; Sebastos had also some jars and pots, and three or four dozen of drinking-glasses, likewise for the king; each of the mules was covered with a carpet, and also the panniers; and upon the pack-saddle, between these panniers, did Strates and Sebastos ride. The mules as well as the loading belonged to the king, and they only were permitted to ride them because they were sick. Strates went first, and, to save trouble, the halter of Sebastos's mule was tied to Strates's saddle, so the mules were fastened to and followed one another. Upon firing the gun so near it, Strates's mule,

mule, not used to compliments of this kind, started, and threw him to the ground; it then trampled upon him, began to run off, and wound the halter around Sebastos behind, who fell to the ground likewise amongst some stones. Both the mules then began kicking at each other, till they had thrown off the panniers and pack-saddles, and broke every thing that was brittle in them. The mischief did not end here, for, in struggling to get loose, they fell foul of the mule of old Azage Tecla Haimanout, one of the king's criminal judges, a very old, feeble man, and threw him upon the ground, and broke his foot, so that he could not walk alone for several months afterwards. As soon as I had pitched a tent for the wounded, and likewise dressed Tecla Haimanout's foot, I went to Kessa Yasous; while the two Mahomets proceeded to the Ras with their money.

The moment I came into the tent, Kessa Yasous rose up and embraced me. He was sitting alone, but with rather a chearful than a dejected countenance; he told me they were all in great concern, till Ayto Adigo's arrival, at a report which came from Gondar that we had fought with Guebra Mehedin, and had all been slain. I informed him every thing I knew, or had heard, but he had better intelligence than I in every article but this last, fresh news having arrived the night before by way of Delakus. He said, the rebellion of Gusfo and Powussen was certain; that the King and Ras knew every circumstance

of it, and that Court-ohha was the place appointed with Fasil to meet and cut them off; he had not heard of Woodage Afahel's march, but seemed to give full credit to it; he said it was certain, likewise, that Fasil had advanced towards Maitsha; but where his quarters were he did not know, probably they were not at a great distance. He complained violently of his march, and of the number of beasts which they had lost; he wished also that Fasil would be induced to give battle where they were encamped, as his horse would probably be of little use to him among so many torrents and rivers, and must suffer considerably in their advancing hither.

I asked him whither they were now marching? He said, that, as soon as the news of the conspiracy were known, a council was held, where it was the general opinion they should proceed briskly forward, and attack Fasil alone at Buré, then turn to Gondar to meet the other two; but then they had it upon the very best authority that great rain had fallen to the southward; that the rivers, which were so frequent in that part of the country, were mostly impassable, so there would be great danger in meeting Fasil with an army spent and fatigued with the difficulty of the roads. It was, therefore, determined, and the Ras was decidedly of that opinion, that they should keep their army entire for a better day, and immediately cross the Nile, and march back to Gondar; that they had accordingly wheeled about, and
that

that day was the first of their proceeding, which had been interrupted by the accident of the firing. Kefla Yafous offered me all sorts of refreshments, and I dined with him; he sent also great abundance for my servants to my tent, lest I should not have yet got my appointments from the king. I then went directly to my own tent, where I found all that belonged to me had arrived safe, under the care of Francisco; and having now procured clothes, instead of those taken from me by Guebra Mehedin, I waited upon the king, and staid a considerable time with him, asking much the same questions Kefla Yafous had done. I would have paid my respects to the Ras also, but missed him, for he was at council.

C H A P. VI.

King's Army retreats towards Gondar—Memorable Passage of the Nile—Dangerous Situation of the Army—Retreat of Kefla Yafous—Battle of Limjour—Unexpected Peace with Fasil—Arrival at Gondar.

IT was on the 26th of May, early in the morning, that the army marched towards the Nile. In the afternoon we encamped, between two and three, on the banks of the river Coga, the church Abbo being something more than half a mile to the north-west of us.

Next morning, the 27th, we left the river Coga, marching down upon the Nile; we passed the church of *Mariam-Net*, as they call the church of St. Anne. Here the superior, attended by about fifty of his monks, came in procession to welcome Ras Michael; but he, it seems, had received some intelligence of ill-offices the people of this quarter had done to the Agows by Fasil's direction; he therefore ordered the church to be plundered, and took the superior, and two of the leading men of the monks, away with him to Gondar; several

several of the others were killed and wounded, without provocation, by the soldiers, and the rest dispersed through the country.

Prince George had sent immediately in the morning to put me in mind that I had promised, in the king's tent at Lamgué, under Emfras, to ride with him in his party when in Maitsha. He commanded about two hundred and fifty chosen horse, and kept at about half a mile's distance on the right flank of the army. I told the king the prince's desire; who only answered, dryly enough, "Not till we pass the Nile; we do not yet know the state of this country." Immediately after this, he detached the horse of Siré and Serawé, and commanded me with his own guards to take possession of the ford where the Fit-Auraris had crossed, and to suffer no mule or horse to pass till their arrival.

There were two fords proposed for our passage; one opposite to the church Boskon Abbo, between the two rivers Kelti and Arooffi, (on the west of the Nile,) and the Koga and Amlac Ohha from the east; it was said to be deep, but passable, though the bottom was of clay, and very soft; the other ford proposed was higher up, at the second cataract of Kerr. It was thought of consequence to chuse this ford, as the Kelti, (itself a large and deep river) joined by the Branti, which comes from the westward of Quaquera, brings, in the rainy season, a prodigious accession of water to the Nile; yet, below this, the guides had advised

vised the Ras to pass, and many found it afterwards a found bottom, very little deeper, with level ground on both sides. We arrived about four on the banks of the Nile, and took possession in a line of about 600 yards of ground.

From the time we decamped from Coga it poured incessantly the most continued rain we ever had yet seen, violent claps of thunder followed close one upon another, almost without interval, accompanied with sheets of lightning, which ran on the ground like water; the day was more than commonly dark, as in an eclipse; and every hollow, or foot-path, collected a quantity of rain, which fell into the Nile in torrents. It would have brought into the dullest mind Mr. Hume's striking lines on my native Carron—

Red ran the river down, and loud and oft
The angry spirit of the water shriek'd.

DOUGLAS.

The Abyssinian armies pass the Nile at all seasons. It rolls with it no trees, stones, nor impediments; yet the sight of such a monstrous mass of water terrified me, and made me think the idea of crossing would be laid aside. It was plain in the face of every one, that they gave themselves over for lost; an universal dejection had taken place, and it was but too visible that the army was defeated by the weather, without having seen an enemy. The Greeks crowded around me, all
forlorn

forlorn and despairing; cursing the hour they had first entered that country, and following these curses with fervent prayers, where fear held the place of devotion. A cold and brisk gale now sprung up at N. W. with a clear sun; and soon after four, when the army arrived on the banks of the Nile, these temporary torrents were all subsided; the sun was hot, and the ground again beginning to become dry.

Netcho, Ras Michael's Fit-Auraris, with about 400 men, had passed in the morning, and taken his station above us in little huts like bee-hives, which the soldiers, who carry no tents, make very speedily and artificially for themselves, of the long, wild oats, each straw of which is at least eight feet long, and near as thick as an ordinary man's little finger. He had sent back word to the king, that his men had passed swimming, and with very great difficulty; that he doubted whether the horses, or loaded mules, could cross at any rate; but, if it was resolved to make the trial, they should do it immediately, without staying till the increase of the river. He said both banks were composed of black earth, slippery and miry, which would become more so when horses had puddled it; he advised, above all, the turning to the right immediately after coming ashore, in the direction in which he had fixed poles, as the earth there was hard and firm, besides having the advantage of some round stones which hindered the beasts from slipping or sinking. Instead, therefore, of resting there

there that night, it was resolved that the horse should cross immediately.

The first who passed was a young man, a relation of the king, brother to Ayamico killed at the battle of Banja; he walked in with great caution, marking a track for the king to pass. He had gone upon rather solid ground, about twice the length of his horse, when he plunged out of his depth, and swam to the other side. The king followed him immediately with a great degree of haste, Ras Michael called to him to proceed with caution, but without success. Afterwards came the old Ras on his mule, with several of his friends swimming both with and without their horses on each side of him, in a manner truly wonderful. He seemed to have lost his accustomed calmness, and appeared a good deal agitated; forbade, upon pain of death, any one to follow him directly, or to swim over, as their custom is, holding their mules by the tail. As soon as these were safely ashore, the king's household and black troops, and I with them, advanced cautiously into the river, and swam happily over, in a deep stream of reddish-coloured water, which ran without violence almost upon a level.

Each horseman had a mule in his hand, which swam after him, or by his side, with his coat of mail and head-piece tied upon it. My horse was a very strong one, and in good condition, and a servant took charge of my mule and coat of mail, so that, being unembarrassed, I had the happiness to get

get safe and soon over, and up the path to the right without great difficulty, so had most others of the cavalry who swam along with us; but the ground now began to be broken on both sides of the passage, and it was almost as difficult to get in, as it was to scramble up the bank afterwards.

*Quis cladem illius noctis, quis funera fando,
Temperet a lachrymis.*—



VIRG.

It is impossible to describe the confusion that followed; night was hard upon us, and, though it increased our loss, it in a great measure concealed it; a thousand men had not yet passed, though on mules and horses; many mired in the muddy landing-place, fell back into the stream, and were carried away and drowned. Of the horse belonging to the king's household, one hundred and eighty in number, seven only were missing; with them Ayto Aylo, vice-chamberlain to the queen, and Tecla Mariam the king's uncle, a great friend of Ras Michael's, both old men.

The ground on the west side was quite of another consistence than was that upon the east, it was firm, covered with short grass, and rose in small hills like the downs in England, all sloping into little valleys which carried off the water, the declivity being always towards the Nile. There was no baggage (the tent of the Ras and that of the king

king excepted) which had as yet come over, and these were wet, being drenched in the river. The Fit-Auraris had left, ready made, two rafts for Ozoro Esther, and the other two ladies, with which she might have easily been conducted over, and without much danger; but the Ras had made Ozoro Esther pass over in the same manner he had crossed himself, many swimming on each side of her mule. She would have fain staid on the east side, but it was in vain to remonstrate. She was with child, and had fainted several times; but yet nothing could prevail with the Ras to trust her on the other bank till morning. She crossed, however, safely, though almost dead with fright. It was said he had determined to put her to death if she did not pass, from jealousy of her falling into the hands of Fasil; but this I will by no means vouch, nor do I believe it. The night was cold and clear, and a strong wind at north-west had blown all the afternoon. Guebra Mascall, and several of Ras Michael's officers, had purposely tarried behind for gathering in the stragglers. The river had abated towards mid-night, when, whether from this cause, or, as they alleged, that they found a more favourable ford, all the Tigré infantry, and many mules lightly loaded, passed with less difficulty than any of the rest had done, and with them several loads of flour; luckily also my two tents and mules, to my great consolation, came safely over when it was near morning. Still the army continued to pass, and

and those that could swim seemed best off. I was in the greatest distress for the good Ammonios, my lieutenant, who was missing, and did not join us till late in the morning, having been all night busy in seeking Ayto Aylo, the queen's chamberlain, and Tycha Marian, who were his great companions, drowned probably at the first attempt to pass, as they were never after heard of.

The greatest part of the foot, however, crossed in the night; and many were of opinion that we had mistaken the passage altogether, by going too high, and being in too great a haste; the banks, indeed, were so steep, it was very plain that this could never have been an accustomed ford for cavalry. Before day-light the van and the center had all joined the king; the number, I believe, that had perished was never distinctly known, for those that were missing were thought to have remained on the other side with Kessa Yafous, at least for that day. Kessa Yafous, indeed, with the rear and all the baggage of the army, had remained on the other side, and, with very few tents pitched, waited the dawn of the morning.

It happened that the priests of the church of Marian Net, in the confusion, had been left unheeded, chained arm to arm, in the rear with Kessa Yafous, and they had begun interceding with him to procure their pardon and dismissal. He was a man, as I said, of the greatest affability and complacency, and heard every one speak with the utmost patience. These priests, terrified to death

left

lest Michael should pull their eyes out, or exercise some of his usual cruelties upon them, which was certainly his intention by bringing them with him to Gondar, frankly declared to Kefla Yafous what they apprehended. They said that they had never known a ford there before, though they had lived many years in the neighbourhood, nor had ever heard of one at Kerr, the first cataract, which the guides had persuaded the rather of the two; they did believe, therefore, that Michael's guides had deceived him on purpose, and that they intended the same thing by him to-morrow, if he attempted to pass at Kerr. They told him further, that, about three days before Michael had arrived in the neighbourhood of Samseen, they had heard a nagareet beat regularly every evening at sun-set, behind the high woody hill in front, whereon was the church of Boskon Abbo; that they had seen also a man the day before who had left Welleta Yafous, Fasil's principal officer and confident, at Goutto, waiting the arrival of some more troops to pass the Nile there, whence they doubted not that there was treachery intended.

The sagacious and prudent Kefla Yafous weighed every word of this in his mind, and, combining all the circumstances together, was immediately convinced that there had been a snare laid by Fasil for them. Entering further into conversation with the priests, and encouraging them with assurances of reward instead of punishment, he inquired if they certainly knew any better ford below.

low. They answered him they knew of no ford but the common one of Delakus, about eight miles below; that it was true it was not good, and it was deeper than ordinary, as the rainy season had begun early, but that it was so perfectly fordable that all the country people had gone with asses loaded with butter and honey, and other provisions, for the market of Gondar last week; from whence they inferred that he could easily ford it, and safely, even with loaded mules. They advised him farther, as the night was dry, and the rain fell generally in the day, to lose no time, but to collect his troops, weary as they were, as soon as possible, and send the heavy baggage before; that there was no river or torrent in their way, but Amlac Ohha, which, at that time of night, was at its lowest, and they might then pass it at their leisure, while he covered them with his troops behind; that in such case they might all be safe over the ford by the time the sun became to be hot in the morning, about which hour they did not doubt he would be attacked by Welleta Yafous. They said farther, that, though they could claim little merit, being prisoners, by offering to be his guides, yet he might perhaps find his use in the measure, and would thereby prove their faith and loyalty to the king.

Although all this bore the greatest shew of probability, and the lives of the informers were in his hands, that cautious general would not undertake a step of so much consequence, as to separate the rear

rear of the army from the king, without further inquiry. There were then in his camp, waiting the event of next day, two of the guides who had brought them to this ford; a third had gone over the river with Ras Michael. There was likewise in his camp a servant of Nanna Georgis, who had arrived some days before with information to Ras Michael. The two guides pretended to be Agows, consequently friends to the king. He called these into his presence, and ordered them to be put in irons, and then sent for the servant of Nanna Georgis. This man immediately knew the one to be his countryman, but declared the other was a Galla, both of them servants of Fasil, and then living in Maitsha.

Kesla Yafous immediately ordered the Kanitz Kitzera (the executioner of the camp) to attend, and having exhorted them to declare the truth for fear of what would speedily follow, and no satisfactory answer being given, he directed the eyes of the eldest, the Galla, to be plucked out; and he continuing still obstinate, he delivered him to the soldiers, who hewed him to pieces with their large knives in the presence of his companion. In the mean time the priests had been very earnest with the young one, the Agow, to confess, with better success; but this execution, to which he had been witness, was more prevailing than all their arguments. Upon promise of life, liberty, and reward, he declared that he had left Fasil behind a hill, which he then shewed, about three miles distant,

distant, in front of the king's army, and had gone down to Welleta Yafous, who was waiting at Gout-to ready to pass the Nile: that they were sent forward to decoy the king to that passage, under the name of a ford, where they expected great part of the army would perish if they attempted to pass: that Fasil was to attack such part of the king's army as should have passed as soon as it appeared upon the heights above the river, but not till, by the firing on the east side, he knew that Welleta Yafous was engaged with the rear, or part of the army, which should still remain on that side separated by the river: that they did not imagine Ras Michael could have passed that night, but that tomorrow he would certainly be attacked by Fasil, as his companion, who had crossed with Ras Michael, was to go directly to Fasil and inform him of the situation of the King, the Ras, and the army.

Kessa Yafous sent two of his principal officers, with a distinct detail of this whole affair, to the king. It being now dark, they swam over the river on horseback, with much more difficulty and danger than we had done, and found Ras Michael and the king in council, to whom they told their message with every circumstance, adding, that Kessa Yafous, as the only way to preserve the army, quite spent with fatigue, and encumbered with such a quantity of baggage, had struck his tent, and would, by that time, be on his march for the ford of Delakus, which he should cross,

and, after leaving a party to guard the baggage and sick, he should with the freshest of his men join the army. The spy that had passed with Michael and the king was now sought for, but he had lost no time, and was gone off to Fafil at Boskon Abbo. Kefla Yafous, having seen all the baggage on their way before him, did, as his last act, perhaps not strictly consistent with justice, hang the poor unfortunate informer, the Agow, upon one of the trees at the ford, that Welleta Yafous, when he passed in the morning, might see how certainly his secret was discovered, and that consequently he was on his guard.

On the 28th he crossed Amlac Ohha with some degree of difficulty, and was obliged to abandon several baggage-mules. He advanced after this with as great diligence as possible to Delakus, and found the ford, though deep, much better than he expected. He had pitched his tent on the high road to Gondar, before Welleta Yafous knew he was decamped, and of this passage he immediately advised Michael refreshing his troops for any emergency.

About two in the afternoon Welleta Yafous appeared with his horse on the other side of the Nile, but it was then too late. Kefla Yafous was so strongly posted, and the banks of the river were so guarded with fire-arms, down to the water-edge, that Fafil and all his army would not have dared to attempt the passage, or even approach the banks of the river.

As soon as Ras Michael received the intelligence, he dispatched the Fit-Auraris, Netcho, to take post upon the ford of the Kelti, a large river, but rather broad than deep, about three miles off. He himself followed early in the morning, and passed the Kelti just at sun-rise, without halting; he then advanced to meet Kessa Yafous, as the army began to want provisions, the little flour that had been brought over, or which the soldiers had taken with them, being nearly exhausted during that night and the morning after. It was found, too, that the men had but little powder, none of them having recruited their quantity since the hunting of the deer; but what they had was in perfect good order, being kept in horns and small wooden bottles, corked in such a manner as to be secured from water of any kind. Kessa Yafous, therefore, being in possession of the baggage, the powder, and the provisions, a junction with him was absolutely necessary, and they expected to effect this at Wainadega, about twenty miles from their last night's quarters. The ground was all firm and level between Kelti and the Avoley, a space of about 15 miles.

Ras Michael halted after passing the Kelti, and sent on the Fit-Auraris about five miles before him; he then ordered what quantity of flour, or provisions of any kind could be found, to be distributed among the men, and directed them to refresh themselves for an hour before they again began their march, because they might expect

soon to engage with Fasil. The day being clear, and the sun hot, those that the cold affected, from the passage of last night, began to recover their former health and agility; their clothes were now all dry, clean washed, and comfortable; and had it not been for the fatigue that remained from the two last days, and the short allowance to which they were reduced, perhaps there were few occasions wherein the army was fitter for an engagement. Being now disembarrassed from dangerous rivers, they were on dry solid ground, which they had often marched over before in triumph, and where all the villages around them, lying in ruins, put them in mind of many victorious campaigns, and especially the recent one at Fagitta over this same Fasil. Add to all this, they were on their way home to Gondar, and that alone made them march with a tenfold alacrity. Gondar, they thought, was to be the end of all their cares, a place of relaxation and ease for the rest of the rainy season.

It was between twelve and one we heard the Fit-Auraris engaged, and there was sharp firing on both sides, which soon ceased. Michael ordered his army immediately to halt; he and the king, and Billetana Gueta Tecla, commanded the van; Welleta Michael, and Ayto Tesfos of Siré, the rear. Having marched a little farther, he changed his order of battle; he drew up the body of troops which he commanded, together with the king, on a flat, large hill, with two valleys running parallel

led to the sides of it like trenches. Beyond these trenches were two higher ridges of hills that ran along the side of them, about half a musket-shot from him; the valleys were soft ground which yet could bear horses, and these hills, on his right and on his left, advanced about 100 yards on each side farther than the line of his front. The tops of these side-divisions occupied the height; but a line of soldiers from them came down to the edge of the valleys like wings. In the plain ground, about three hundred yards directly in his front, he had placed all the cavalry, except the king's body-guards drawn up before him, commanded by an old officer of Mariam Barea. As prince George was in the cavalry, he strongly solicited the Ras at least to let him remain with them, and see them engage; but the Ras, considering his extreme youth and natural rashness, called him back, and placed him beside me before the king. It was not long before the Fit-Auraris's two messengers arrived, running like deer along the plain, which was not absolutely flat, but sloped gently down towards us, declining, as I should guess, not a fathom in fifteen.

Their account was, that they had fallen in with Fasil's Fit-Auraris; that they had attacked him smartly, and, though the enemy were greatly superior, being all horse, except a few musqueteers, had killed four of them. The Ras having first heard the message of the Fit-Auraris alone, he sent a man to report it to the king; and, immediately

ately after this, he ordered two horsemen to go full gallop along the east side of the hill, the low road to Wainadega, to warn Kessa Yafous of Fafil's being near at hand; he likewise directed the Fit-Auraris to advance cautiously till he had seen Fafil, and to pursue no party that should retreat before him.

The King, the Ras, and the whole army, began to be in pain for Kessa Yafous; and we should have changed our ground, and marched forward immediately, had we not heard the alarm-guns fired by Fit-Auraris Netcho, and presently he and his party came in, the men running, and the horses at full gallop. Ras Michael had given his orders, and returned to the presence of the king on his mule; he could not venture among horse, being wounded in the middle of the thigh, and lame in that leg, but always charged on a mule among the musquetry. He said shortly to the king, "No fear, Sir, stand firm; Fafil is lost if he fights to-day on this ground."

Fafil appeared at the top of the hill. I have no guess about the number of such large bodies of troops, but, by those more used to such computations, it is said he had about 3000 horse. It was a fine fight, but the evening was beginning to be overcast. After having taken a full view of the army, they all began to move slowly down the hill, beating their kettle-drums. There were two trees a little before the cavalry, that were advanced beyond our front. Fafil sent down a party to skirmish

mish with these, and he himself halted after having made a few paces down the hill. The two bodies of horse met just half way at the two trees, and mingled together, as appeared at least, with very decisive intention; but whether it was by orders or from fear, (for they were not overmatched in numbers) our horse turned their backs and came precipitately down, so that we were afraid they would break in upon the foot. Several shots were fired from the center at them by order of the Ras, who cried out aloud in derision, "Take away these horses and send them to the mill." They divided, however, to the right and left, into the two grassy valleys under cover of the musquetry, and a very few horse of Fasil's were carried in along with them, and slain by the soldiers on the side of the hill. On the king's side no man of note was missing but Welleta Michael, nephew of Ras Michael, whose horse falling, he was taken prisoner and carried off by Fasil.

A few minutes after this, arrived a messenger from Fasil, a dwarf, named Doho, a man always employed on errands of this kind; it is an intercourse which is permitted, and the messenger not only protected, but rewarded, as I have before observed; it is a singular custom, and none but shrewd fellows are sent, very capable of making observations, and Doho was one of these. He told the Ras to prepare immediately, for Fasil intended to attack him as soon as he had brought his foot up: Doho further added a request from

his

his master, as a mark of his duty, that the king might not change his dress that day, lest he might fall into the hands of some of the stranger troops of Galla, who might not know him otherwise, or shew the proper respect to his person. The Ras, I was told afterwards, for he was too far before for us to hear him, laughed violently at this compliment. "Tell Fasil, says he, to wait but a few minutes where he now is, and I promise him that the king shall dress in any way he pleases." When Doho's message was told to the king, he sent back answer to Ras Michael, "Let Doho tell Fasil from me, that, if I had known those two trees had been where they are, I would have brought Welleta Gabriel, Ozoro Esther's steward, to him; by which he very archly alluded to the battle of Fagitta, where that drunkard, shooting from behind a tree, and killing one Galla, made all the rest fly for fear of the zibib.

Doho being thus dismissed, the whole army advanced immediately at a very brisk pace, hooping and screaming, as is their custom, in a most harsh and barbarous manner, crying out Hatzé Ali! Michael Ali! But Fasil, who saw the forward countenance of the king's troops, and that a few minutes would lay him under a necessity of risking a battle, which he did not intend, withdrew his troops at a smart trot over the smooth downs, returning towards Boskon Abbo. It seems, as we heard afterwards, he was in as great anxiety about the fate of Welleta Yafous, of whom he had no intelligence,

intelligence, as we had been for that of Kefla Yafous; and he had got as yet no intelligence till he had taken Welleta Michael prisoner; he had heard no firing, nor did he consequently know whether Kefla Yafous had passed the Nile with the Ras or not; he had, therefore, left his camp, and marched with his horse only to take a view of Michael, but had no sort of intention to give him battle; and he was now very much exasperated against both Gusho and Powuffen, by whom he saw plainly that he had been betrayed.

This is what was called the battle of Limjour, from a village burnt by Ras Michael last campaign, which stood where the two trees are; the name of a battle is surely more than it deserves. Had Fafil been half as willing as the Ras, it could not have failed being a decisive one. The Ras, who saw that Fafil would not fight, easily penetrated his reasons, and no sooner was he gone, and his own drums were silent, then he heard a nagareet beat, and knew it to be that of Kefla Yafous. This general encamped upon the river Avoley, leaving his tents and baggage under a proper guard, and had marched with the best and freshest of his troops to join Michael before the engagement. All was joy at meeting, every rank of men joined in extolling the merit and conduct of their leaders; and, indeed, it may be fairly said, the situation of the king and army was desperate at that instant, when the troops were separated on different sides of the Nile; nor could they have been saved
but

but by the speedy resolution taken by Kefla Yafous to march without loss of time and pass at the ford of Delakus, and the diligence and activity with which he executed that resolution.

Although a good part of Kefla Yafous's soldiers were left at the Avoley, the Ras, as a mark of confidence, gave him the command of the rear. We were retreating before an enemy, and it was, therefore, the post of honour, where the Ras would have been himself, had not Kefla Yafous joined us. We soon marched the five miles, or thereabout, that remained to the Avoley, and arrived just as the sun was setting, and there heard from the spies that Welleta Yafous with his troops had retired again to Goutto, after having been joined by Woodage Afahel. There again were fresh rejoicings, as every one recovered their baggage and provisions, many rejoined their friends they had given over as lost at the passage, and the whole army prepared their supper. All but Ras Michael seemed to have their thoughts bent upon sleep and rest; whilst he, the most infirm and aged of the army, no sooner was under cover of his tent than he ordered the drum to beat for assembling a council. What passed there I did not know; I believe nothing but a repetition of the circumstances that induced Kefla Yafous to advance to Delakus, for, after supper, just before the king went to bed in the evening, a man from Kefla Yafous brought the four priests of Mariam Net, who had been the guides to the ford at Delakus. The king
ordered

ordered meat to be set before them, but they had done very well already with Kefla Yafous, and, therefore, only took a small piece of bread and a cup of bouza, the eating and drinking in presence of the king being an assurance that their life was safe and pardon real. They had then five ounces of gold, and several changes of clothes given to each of them, and the king took them to Gondar with him, to provide for them there, out of the reach of the revenge of Fasil, and placed them in the church of Hamar Noh*.

The army marched next day to Dingleber, a high hill, or rock, approaching so close to the lake as scarcely to leave a passage between. Upon the top of this rock is the king's house. As we arrived very early there, and were now out of Fasil's government, the king insisted upon treating Ras Michael and all the people of consideration. A great quantity of cattle had been sent thither from Dembea by those who had estates in the neighbourhood, out of which he gave ten oxen to Ras Michael, ten to Kefla Yafous, the same number to several others, and one to myself, with two ounces of gold for Strates and Sebastos to buy mules; but they had already provided themselves; for, besides the two they rode upon of mine, they and my servants had picked up four others in very good condition, whose masters had

* This is a large church belonging to the palace, called by this extraordinary name, *Noah's Ark*.

probably

probably perished in the river, for they were never claimed afterwards.

Just as the king sat down to dinner an accident happened that occasioned great trepidation among all his servants. A black eagle* was chased into the king's tent by some of the birds of prey that hover about the camp; and it was after in the mouth of every one the king would be dethroned by a man of inferior birth and condition. Every body at that time looked to Fasil: the event proved the application false, though the omen was true. Powussen of Begemder was as low-born as Fasil, as great a traitor, but more successful, to whom the ominous presage pointed; and, though we cannot but look upon the whole as accident, it was but too soon fulfilled.

In the evening of the 29th arrived at Dingleber two horsemen from Fasil clad in habits of peace, and without arms; they were known to be two of his principal servants, were grave, genteel, middle-aged men; this message had nothing of Dobo's buffoonery. They had an audience early after their coming, first of the Ras, then of the King. They said, and said truly, that Fasil had repassed the Kelti, was encamped on the opposite side, and was not yet joined by Welleta Yafous. Their errand was, to desire that the Ras might not fatigue his men by unnecessarily hurrying on to Gondar, because he might rest secured of re-

* See a figure of this bird in the Appendix.

ceiving no further molestation from Fafil their master, as he was on his march to Burè. They told the Ras the whole of the conspiracy, as far as it regarded him, and the agreement that Powussen and Gusso had made with their master to surround him at Derdera: they mentioned, moreover, how sensible Fafil was of their treason towards him; that, instead of keeping their word, they had left him to engage the King and the Ras's whole force at a time when they knew the greatest part of his Galla troops were retired to the other side of the Nile, and could not be assembled without difficulty: That if the Ras by chance had crossed at Delakus, as Kessa Yafous had done, instead of embarrassing his army among the rivers of Maitsha, and crossing the Nile at that most dangerous place near Amlac-Ohha, (a passage never before attempted in the rainy season) the consequence would have been, that he must have either fought at great disadvantage with an inferior army against the Ras, or have retired to Metchakel, leaving his whole country to the mercy of his enemies. Fafil declared his resolution never again to appear in arms against the king, but that he would hold his government under him, and pay the accustomed taxes punctually: he promised also, that he would renounce all manner of connection with Gusso and Powussen, as he had already done, and he would take the field against them next season with his whole force, whenever the king ordered him. The messengers concluded,

ded, with desiring the Ras to give Fafil his granddaughter, Welleta Selaffé, in marriage, and that he would then come to Gondar without distrust.

At the audience they had of the king the same night, they added, That Fafil could not trust Ras Michael, he broke his word so often, and had so many reservations and evasions in his promises.

The Ras, though he did not believe all this, made no difficulty in agreeing to every thing that they desired. He promised the grand daughter; and, as an earnest of his believing the rest, the king's two nagareets were brought to the door of the tent, where, to our very great surprise, we heard it proclaimed, "Fafil is governor of the Agow, Maitsha, Gojam, and Damot; prosperity to him, and long may he live a faithful servant to the king our master!"—This was an extraordinary revolution in so small a space of time. It was scarce 43 hours since Fafil had laid a scheme for drowning the greater part of the army in the Nile, and cutting the throats of the residue on both sides of it; it was not twenty-four hours, since he had met us to fight in open field, and now he was become the king's lieutenant-general in four of the most opulent provinces of Abyssinia. This was produced, however, by the necessity of the times, and both parties were playing at the same game who should over-reach the other. Fafil's messengers were magnificently cloathed, and it was first intended they should have gone back to him; but, after reflection, another person was sent, these

two

two chusing to go to Gondar with the king to remain hostages for Fafil's word, and to bring back his investiture from thence to Buré. The whole camp abandoned itself to joy.

Late in the evening Ozoro Esther came to the king's tent. She had been ill, and alarmed, as she well might, at the passage of the Nile, which had given her a more delicate look than ordinary; she was dressed all in white, and I thought I seldom had seen so handsome a woman. The king, as I have mentioned, had sent ten oxen to Ras Michael, but he had given twenty to Ozoro Esther; and it was to thank him for this extraordinary mark of favour that she had come to visit him in his tent. I had for some time past, indeed, thought they were not insensible to the merit of each other. Upon her thanking the king for the distinction he had shewn her, Madam, said he, your husband Ras Michael is intent upon employing, in the best way possible for my service, those of the army that are strong and vigorous; you, I am told, bestow your care on the sick and disabled, and, by your attention, they are restored to their former health and activity; the strong active soldier eats the cows that I have sent to the Ras; the enfeebled and sick recover upon yours, for which reason I sent you a double portion, that you may have it in your power to do double good. After this the room was cleared, and she had an audience alone for half an hour. I doubt very much whether Ras Michael had any share in the conversation;

conversation; the king was in the very gayest humour, and went to rest about twelve. The Ras loved Ozoro Esther, but was not jealous.

I had violent threatenings of the ague, and had gone to bed full of reflections on extraordinary events that, in a few hours, had as it were crowded upon one another. I had appointed Fasil's servants to come to my tent in the evening, I understood a council had been called, to which Welleta Kyrillos, the king's historiographer, had been sent for, and instructed how to give an account of this campaign of Maitsha, the passage of the Nile, and the meeting with Fasil at Limjour. Kefla Yafous's march to Delakus, and passage there, were ordered to be written in gold letters, and so was Fasil's appointment to Damot and Maitsha. From this authentic copy, and what I myself heard or observed, I formed these notes of the campaign.

On the 30th of May nothing material happened, and, in a few days, we arrived at Gondar. The day before we entered, being encamped on the river Kemona, came two messengers from Gulho and Powussen, with various excuses why they had not joined. They were very ill received by the Ras, and refused an audience of the king. Their present, which is always new clothes to some value, was a small piece of dark-blue Surat cloth, value about half-a-crown, intended as an affront; they were not suffered to sleep in the camp, but forwarded to Fasil where they were going.

The

The 3d of June the army encamped on the river Kahha, under Gondar. From the time we left Dingleber, some one or other of the Ras's confidential friends had arrived every day. Several of the great officers of state reached us at the Kemona, many others met us at Abba Samuel. I did not perceive the news they brought increased the spirits either the king or the Ras; the soldiers, however, were all contented, because they were at home; but the officers, who saw farther, wore very different countenances, especially those that were of Amhara.

I, in particular, had very little reason to be pleased; for, after having undergone a constant series of fatigues, dangers, and expences, I was returned to Gondar disappointed of my views in arriving at the source of the Nile, without any other acquisition than a violent ague. The place where that river rises remained still as great a secret as it had been ever since the catastrophe of Phaeton:—

*Nilus in extremum fugit perterritus orbem,
Occulitque caput, quod adhuc latet.—*

OVID. METAM. lib. ii.

C H A P. VII.

King and Army retreat to Tigré—Interesting Events following that Retreat—The Body of Joas is found—Favourable Turn of the King's Affairs—Socinius, a new King, proclaimed at Gondar.

THE king had heard that Gusho and Powuffen, with Gojam under Ayto Aylo, and all the troops of Belessen and Lasta, were ready to fall upon him in Gondar as soon as the rains should have swelled the Tacazzé, so that the army could not retire into Tigré; and it was now thought to be the instant this might happen, as the king's proclamation in favour of Fasil, especially the giving him Gojam, it was not doubted, would hasten the motion of the rebels. Accordingly that very morning, after the king arrived, the proclamation was made at Gondar, giving Fasil Gojam, Damot, the Agow, and Maitsha; after which his two servants were again magnificently cloathed, and sent back with honour.

As I had never despaired, some way or other, of arriving at the fountains of the Nile, from
which

which we were not fifty miles distant when we turned back at Karcagna, so I never neglected to improve every means that held out to me the least probability of accomplishing this end. I had been very attentive and serviceable to Fasil's servants while in the camp. I spoke greatly of their master, and, when they went away, gave each of them a small present for himself, and a trifle also for Fasil. They had, on the other hand, been very importunate with me as a physician to prescribe something for a cancer on the lip, as I understood it to be, with which Welleta Yafous, Fasil's principal general, was afflicted.

I had been advised, by some of my medical friends, to carry along with me a preparation of hemlock, or cicuta, recommended by Dr. Storck, a physician at Vienna. A considerable quantity had been sent me from France by commission, with directions how to use it. To keep on the safe side, I prescribed small doses to Welleta Yafous, being much more anxious to preserve myself from reproach than warmly solicitous about the cure of my unknown patient. I gave him positive advice to avoid eating raw meat; to keep to a milk diet, and drink plentifully of whey when he used this medicine. They were overjoyed at having succeeded so well in their commission, and declared before the king, That Fasil their master would be more pleased with receiving a medicine that would restore Welleta Yafous to health, than with the magnificent appointments the king's

goodness had bestowed upon him. "If it is so, said I, in this day of grace, I will ask two favours."—"And that's a rarity, says the king; come, out with them; I don't believe any body is desirous you should be refused; I certainly am not; only I bar one of them, you are not to relapse into your usual despondency, and talk of going home."—"Well, Sir, said I, I obey, and that is not one of them. They are these—You shall give me, and oblige Fasil to ratify it, the village Geesh, and the source where the Nile rises, that I may be from thence furnished with honey for myself and servants; it shall stand me instead of Tangouri, near Emfras, and, in value, it is not worth so much. The second is, That, when I shall see that it is in his power to carry me to Geesh, and shew me those sources, Fasil shall do it upon my request, without fee or reward, and without excuse or evasion.

They all laughed at the easiness of the request; all declared that this was nothing, and wished to do ten times as much. The king said, "Tell Fasil I do give the village of Geesh, and those fountains he is so fond of, to Yagoube and his posterity for ever, never to appear under another's name in the destar, and never to be taken from him, or exchanged, either in peace or war. Do you swear this to him in the name of your master." Upon which they took the two fore fingers of my right hand, and, one after the other, laid the two fore fingers of their right hand across them, then
kissed

kissed them; a form of swearing used there, at least among those that call themselves Christians. And as Azage Kyrillos, the king's secretary and historian, was then present, the king ordered him to enter the gift in the deftar or revenue-book where the taxes and revenue of the king's lands are registered. "I will write it, says the old man, in letters of gold, and, poor as I am, will give him a village four times better than either Geesh or Tangouri, if he will take a wife and stay amongst us, at least till my eyes are closed." It will be easily guessed this rendered the conversation a cheerful one. Fasil's servants retired to set out the next day, gratified to their utmost wish, and, as soon as the king was in bed, I went to my apartment likewise.

But very different thoughts were then occupying Michael and his officers. They could not trust Fasil, and, besides, he could do them no service; the rain was set in, and he was gone home; the western part of the kingdom was ready to rise upon them; Woggora, to the north, immediately in his way, was all in arms, and impatient to revenge the severities they had suffered when Michael first marched to Gondar. The Tacazzé, which separates Tigrè from Woggora, and runs at the foot of the high mountains of Samen, was one of the largest and most rapid rivers in Abyssinia, and, though not the first to overflow, was, when swelled to its height, impassable by horse or foot, rolling down prodigious stones and trees with its current.

Danger.

Dangerous as the passage was, however, there was no safety but in attempting it: Michael, therefore, and every soldier with him, were of opinion that, if they must perish, they should rather meet death in the river, on the confines of their own country, than fall alive into the hands of their enemies in Amhara. For this, preparation had been making night and day, since Ras Michael entered Gondar, and probably before it.

There was in Belessen, on the nearest and easiest way to a ford of the Tacazzè, a man of quality called Adero, and his son Zor Woldo. To these two Ras Michael used to trust the care of the police of Gondar when he was absent upon any expedition; they were very active and capable, but had fallen from their allegiance, and joined Powussen and Gusho, at least in councils. The Ras, immediately upon arriving at Gondar, dissembling what he knew of their treason, had sent to them to prepare a quantity of flour for the troops that were to pass their way; to get together what horses they could as quietly as possible; to send him word what state the ford was in; and also, if Powussen had made any movement forward; or if Ayto Tesfos, governor of Samen, had shewn any disposition to dispute the passage through Woggora into Tigré. Word was immediately returned by the traitor Adero, that the ford was as yet very passable; that it was said Powussen was marching towards Maitsha; that Ayto Tesfos was at home upon his high rock, the seat of his government,

ment, and that no time was to be lost, as he believed he had already flour enough to suffice; he added also, that it would be dangerous to collect more, for it would give the alarm. This was all received as truth, and a messenger sent back with orders, that Zor Woldo should leave the flour in small bags at Ebenaat, and that he should himself and his father wait the Ras at the ford, with what horse they had, the fourth day from that, in the evening.

The next morning the whole army was in motion. I had the evening before taken leave of the king in an interview which cost me more than almost any one in my life. The substance was, That I was ill in my health, and quite unprepared to attend him into Tigré; that my heart was set upon completing the only purpose of my coming into Abyssinia, without which I should return into my own country with disgrace; that I hoped, through his majesty's influence, Fasil might find some way for me to accomplish it; if not, I trusted soon to see him return, when I hoped it would be easy; but, if I then went to Tigré, I was fully persuaded I should never have the resolution to come again to Gondar.

He seemed to take heart at the confidence with which I spoke of his return. "You, Yagoube, says he, in a humble, complaining tone, could tell me, if you pleased, whether I shall or not, and what is to befall me; those instruments and those wheels, with which you are constantly looking at
the

the stars, cannot be for any use unless for prying into futurity.”—“ Indeed, said I, prince, these are things by which we guide ships at sea, and by these we mark down the ways that we travel by land; teach them to people that never passed them before, and, being once traced, keep them thus to be known by all men for ever. But of the decrees of Providence, whether they regard you or myself, I know no more than the mule upon which you ride.”—“ Tell me then, I pray, tell me, what is the reason you speak of my return as certain?”—“ I speak, said I, from observation, from reflections that I have made, much more certain than prophecies and divinations by stars. The first campaign of your reign at Fagitta, when you was relying upon the dispositions that the Ras had most ably and skilfully made, a drunkard, with a single shot, defeated a numerous army of your enemies. Powussen and Gusho were your friends, as you thought, when you marched out last, yet they had, at that very instant, made a league to destroy you at Derdera; and nothing but a miracle could have saved you, shut up between two lakes and three armies. It was neither you nor Michael that disordered their councils, and made them fail in what they had concerted. You was for burning Samseen, whilst Woodage Afahel was there in ambush with a large force, with a knowledge of all the fords, and master of all the inhabitants of the country. Remember how you passed those rivers, holding hand in hand,
and

and drawing one another over. Could you have done this with an enemy behind you, and such an enemy as Woodage Afahel? He would have followed and harrassed you till you took the ford at Goutto, and there was Welleta Yafous waiting to oppose you with 6000 men on the opposite bank. When Ras Michael marched by Mariam Net, he found the priests at their homes. Was that the case in any of the other churches we passed? No; all were fled for fear of Michael; yet these were more guilty than any by their connections with Fasil; notwithstanding which, they alone, of all others, staid, though they knew not why; an invisible hand held them that they might operate your preservation. Nothing could have saved the army but the desperate passage, so tremendous that it will exceed the belief of man, crossing the Nile that night. Yet if the priests had crossed before this, not a man would have proceeded to the ford. The priests would have been Ras Michael's prisoners, and, on the other side, they never would have spoken a word whilst in the presence of Michael. Providence, therefore, kept them with Kefla Yafous; all was discovered, and the army saved by the retreat, and his speedy passing at the ford of Delakus.

What would have happened to Kefla Yafous, had Fasil marched down to Delakus either before or after the passage? Kefla Yafous would have been cut off before Ras Michael had passed the Kelti; instead of which, an unknown cause detained him,
most

most infatuated-like, beating his kettle-drums behind Boskon Abbo, while our army under the Ras was swimming that dangerous river, and most of us passing the night, naked, without tents, provision, or powder. Nor did he ever think of presenting himself till we had warmed ourselves by an easy march in a fine day, when we were every way his superiors, and Kessa Yafous in his rear. From all these special marks of the favour of an over-ruling Providence, I do believe steadfastly that God will not leave his work half finished. "He it is who, governing the whole universe, has yet reserved specially to himself the department of war; he it is who has stiled himself the God of Battles." The king was very much moved, and, as I conceived, persuaded. He said, "O Yagoube, go but with me to Tigrè, and I will do for you whatever you desire me." "You do, Sir, said I, whatever I desire you, and more. I have told you my reasons why that cannot be; let me stay here a few months, and wait your return." The king then advised me to live entirely at Koscam with the Itèghè, without going out unless Fasil came to Gondar, and to send him punctually word how I was treated. Upon this we parted with inexpressible reluctance. He was a king worthy to reign over a better people; my heart was deeply penetrated with those marks of favour and condescension which I had uniformly received from him ever since I entered his palace.

On

On the 5th of June, while Powussen, Adero, and the conspirators were waiting his passage through Belessen, (that is to the S. W.) the king's army marched towards Koscam, over the mountain Debra Tzai towards Walkayt, and the low, hot provinces of Abyssinia which lie to the N. E. so that the distance between them increased every day in the greatest proportion possible.

The queen ordered her gates at Koscam to be shut. A little before the Ras mounted his mule, Ozoro Esther and her servants took refuge with her mother the Iteghè; Gondar was like a town which had been taken by an enemy; every one that had arms in his hands did just what he pleased.

Two very remarkable things were said to have happened the night before Michael left the city. He had always pretended, that, before he undertook an expedition, a person, or spirit, appeared to him, who told him the issue and consequence of the measures he was then taking; this he imagined to be St. Michael the archangel, and he presumed very much upon this intercourse. In a council that night, where none but friends were present, he had told them that his spirit had appeared some nights before, and ordered him, in his retreat, to surprise the mountain of Wechné, and either slay or carry with him to Tigré the princes sequestered there. Nebrit Tecla, governor of Axum, with his two sons, (all concerned in the late king's murder) were, it is said, strong advisers

advisers of this measure ; but Ras Michael, (probably fatiated with royal blood already) Kefla Yafous, and all the more worthy men of any consequence, acting on principle, absolutely refused to consent to it. It was upon this the passage by Belleffen was substituted instead of the attempt on Wechné, and it was determined to conceal it.

The next advice which, the Ras said, this devil, or angel, gave him, was, that they should set fire to the town of Gondar, and burn it to the ground, otherwise his good fortune was to leave him there for ever ; and for this there was a great number of advocates, Michael seeming to lean that way himself. But, when it was reported to the king, that young prince put a direct negative upon it, by declaring that he would rather stay in Gondar, and fall by the hands of his enemies, than either conquer them, or escape from them, by the commission of so enormous a crime ; when this was publicly known, it procured the king universal good-will, as was experienced afterwards, when he and Michael were finally defeated, and taken prisoners, upon their march in return to Gondar.

The army advanced rapidly towards Walkayt. Being near the Tacazzé, they turned short upon Mai-Lumi, (the River of Limes) the governor of which, as I have already said, in our journey from Masuah, detained us several days at Addergey with a view to rob us, upon a report prevailing that Ras Michael was defeated at Fagitta. This
thief

thief the king surprised and made prisoner, set fire to his house after having plundered it, and carried him as hostage to Tigré, for the payment of a sum which he laid upon every village to save them from being set on fire.

Being now safely arrived on the banks of the Tacazzé, the first province beyond which is that of Sirè, Michael sent before him Ayto Tesfos the governor, a man exceedingly beloved, to assemble all sort of assistance for passing the river. Every one flocked to the stream with the utmost alacrity; the water was deep, and the baggage wet in crossing, but the bottom was good and hard; they passed both expeditiously and safely, and were received in Siré, and then in Tigré, with every demonstration of joy.

Michael, now arrived in his government, set himself seriously to unite every part under his own jurisdiction. It was now the rainy season; there was no possibility of taking the field, and a rebellion prevailed in two different districts of his province. The sons of Kasmati Woldo, whose father Ras Michael put to death, had declared for themselves, in their paternal government of Enderta, and Netcho who married Ras Michael's daughter, had taken possession of the mountain Aromata, commonly called Haramat, an ancient strong hold of his father's, of which Michael had made himself master, while yet a young man, after besieging it fifteen years. Netcho had also united himself with Za Menfus Kedus, a man of great

great property in that and the neighbouring country. Enderta is a flat, fertile territory, in the very south-east of Abyssinia, depending on Tigré, and the mountain Aromata is situated near the middle of that province; before taking the field, Michael had directed the two Woldos to be assassinated during a feast at Enderta, and their party dispersed of itself without farther effort.

The mountain shewed a better countenance, and seemed to promise employment for a long time; it was garrisoned by old and veteran troops who had served under Ras Michael. Netcho was the son of his hereditary enemy, anciently governor of that mountain, whom he had reconciled by giving him his daughter in marriage; notwithstanding which he had now rebelled, just as the Ras marched to Maitsha against Fasil, by the persuasion of Gusho and Powussen, purposely that he might form a diversion in Tigré, and for this reason he had little hopes of mercy, if ever he fell into the hands of Ras Michael. I had seen him often, and knew him; he was a tall, thin, dull man, of a soft temper, and easily imposed upon. Za Menfus, the other chief in the mountain, was a very active, resolute, enterprising man, of whom Michael was afraid. He had a large property all around the mountain; had been put in irons by Michael, and had escaped; besides, on his return to Tigré, he had slain the father of Guebra Mascal, Michael's nephew by marriage, who was commander in chief of all the musquetry Michael
had

had brought from Tigre, so that he feared nothing so much as falling into Ras Michael's hands.

Ras Michael saw the danger of leaving an enemy so prepared and so situated behind him; he therefore, before the rainy season was yet finished, ordered the whole mountain to be surrounded with barracks, or huts, for his soldiers; he also erected three houses for himself, the principal officers, and the king. The country people were called in to plow and sow the ground in the neighbourhood, so that his intention was plainly never to rise from thence till he had reduced the mountain of Aromata for the second time, after having once before succeeded in taking it, after sixteen years siege, from Netcho's father. There we shall leave him at this siege, and return to Gondar.

It was on the 10th of June that Gusso and Powussen entered Gondar, and next day, the 11th, waited upon the queen; they both beseeched her to return from Koscam to the capital, and take into her hands the reins of government for the interim: this she positively refused, unless peace was first made with Fasil. She said, that Fasil was the only person who had endeavoured to avenge his master Joas's death; that he had continued till that day in arms in that quarrel; and, notwithstanding all the offers that could be made her, she never would come to Gondar, nor take any part in public business, without this condition. Fasil, moreover, informed her by a messenger, that there was no trust to be put either in Gusso
or

or Powuffen; that they had failed in their engagement of following and fighting Ras Michael in Maitsha, and had purposely staid at home till a superior army should fall upon him singly, and ravage his country: That they had broken their word a second time by entering into Gondar without him; whereas the agreement was, that they all three should have done this at once, to settle the form of government by their joint deliberation. Many days passed in these negotiations; Fafil always promising to come upon some condition or other, but never keeping his word, or stirring from Buré.

On the 20th, the queen's servants, who had gone to offer terms of reconciliation to Fafil on the part of Gusso and Powuffen, returned to their homes. The same day he ordered it to be proclaimed in the market-place, That Ayto Tesfos should be governor of Samen, and that whoever should rob on that road, or commit any violence, should suffer death. This was an act of power, purposely intended to affront Powuffen and Gusso, and seemed to be opening a road for a correspondence with Ras Michael; but, above all, it shewed contempt for their party and their cause, and that he considered his own as very distinct from theirs; for Tesfos had taken arms in the late king's lifetime, at the same time, and upon the same principles and provocation, as Fafil, and had never laid down his arms, or made peace with Ras Michael, but kept his government in defiance of him.

On

On the 24th, for fear of giving umbrage, I waited upon Gusho and Powuffen at Gondar. I saw them in the same room where Ras Michael used to sit. They were both lying on the floor playing at draughts, with the figure of a draught-table drawn with chalk upon the carpet; they offered no other civility or salutation, but, shaking me each by the hand, they played on, without lifting their heads, or looking me in the face.

Gusho began by asking me, "Would it not have been better if you had gone with me to Amhara, as I desired you, when I saw you last at Gondar? you would have saved yourself a great deal of fatigue and trouble in that dangerous march through Maitsha." To this I answered, "It is hard for me, who am a stranger, to know what is best to be done in such a country as this. I was, as you may have heard, the king's guest, and was favoured by him; it was my duty therefore to attend him, especially when he desired it; and such I am informed has always been the custom of the country; besides, Ras Michael laid his commands upon me." On this, says Powuffen, shaking his head, "You see he cannot forget Michael and the Tigré yet."—"Very naturally," added Gusho, they were good to him; he was a great man in their time; they gave him considerable sums of money, and he spent it all among his own soldiers, the king's guard, which they had given him to command after the Armenian. Yagoube taught him and his brother

George to ride on horseback like the Franks, and play tricks with guns and pikes on horseback; folly, all of it to be sure, but I never heard he meddled in affairs, or that he spoke ill of any one, much less did any harm, like those rascals the Greeks when they were in favour in Joas's time, for it was not their fault they did not direct every thing."—"I hope I never did, said I; sure I am I never so intended, nor had I any provocation. I have received much good usage from every one; and the honour, if I do not forget, of a great many professions and assurances of friendship from you, said I, turning to Gusko. He hesitated a little, and then added very superciliously, "Aye, aye, we were, as I think, always friends."—"You have had, says Powuffen, a devilish many hungry bellies since we left Gondar."—"You will excuse me, Sir, replied I, as to that article; I at no time found any difference whether you was in Gondar or not."—"There, says Gusko, by St. Demetrius, there is a truth for you, and you don't often hear that in Begemder. May I suffer death if ever you gave a jar of honey to any white man in your life."—"But I, says Powuffen, sitting upright on the floor, and leaving off play, will give you, Yagoube, a present better than Gusko's paultry jars of honey. I have brought with me, addressing himself to me, your double-barrelled gun, and your sword, which I took from that son of a wh---e Guebra Mehedin: by St. Michael, continued Powuffen, if I had got hold

hold of that infidel I would have hanged him upon the first tree in the way for daring to say that he was one of my army when he committed that unmanly robbery upon your people. The Iteghé, your friend, would yesterday have given me ten loads of wheat for your gun, for she believes I am to carry it back to Begemder again, and do not mean to give it you, but come to my tent to-morrow and you shall have it." I very well understood his meaning, and that he wanted a present ; but was happy to recover my gun at any rate.

I arose to get away, as what had passed did not please me ; for before the king's retreat to Tigré, Gusko had sat in my presence uncovered to the waist, in token of humility, and many a cow, many a sheep, and jar of honey he had sent me ; but my importance was now gone with the king ; I was fallen ! and they were resolved, I saw, to make me sensible of it. I told the queen, on my return, what had passed. They are both brutes, said she ; but Gusko should have known better.

The next morning, being the 25th, about eight o'clock I went to Powuffen's tent. His camp was on the Kahha, near the church of Ledata, or the Nativity. After waiting near an hour, I was admitted ; two women sat by him, neither handsome nor cleanly dressed ; and he returned me my gun and sword, which was followed by a small present on my part. This, says he, turning to the women, is a man who knows every thing that is to

come ; who is to die, and who is to live ; who is to go to the devil, and who not ; who loves her husband, and who cuckolds him.”---“ Tell me then, Yagoube, says one of the women, will Tecla Haimanout and Michael ever come to Gondar again ?”---“ I do not know who you mean, Madam, said I ; is it the king and the Ras you mean ?”---“ Call him the King, says the other woman in half a whisper ; he loves the king.”---“ Well, aye, come, let it be the king then, says she ; will the King and Ras Michael ever come to Gondar ?”---“ Surely, said I, the king is king, and will go to any part of his dominions he pleases, and when he pleases ; do you not hear he is already on his way ?”---“ Aye, aye, by G-d, says Powussen, no fear he’ll come with a vengeance, therefore I think it is high time that I was in Begemder.” He then shrugged up his shoulders, and rose, upon which I took my leave. He had kept me standing all the time ; and when I came to Koscam I made my report as usual to the Iteghé, who laughed very heartily, though the king’s arrival, which was prophesied, was likely to be a very serious affair to her.

That very day, in the evening, came a servant from Ras Michael, with taunts and severe threats to the queen, to Powussen, and Gusho ; he said he was very quickly bringing the king back to Gondar, and being now old, intended to pass the rest of his life in Tigré ; he, therefore, hoped they would await the king’s coming to Gondar, and
chuse

chuse a Ras for his successor from among themselves, as he understood they were all friends, and would easily agree, especially as it was to oblige him.

On the 27th, Gusho and Powuffen waited upon the queen to take their leave. They declared it was not their intention to stay at Gondar, merely to be alternately the subject of merriment and scoffing to Michael and to Fasil, and upon this they immediately set out on their way home, without drum or trumpet, or any parade whatever.

Immediately after, arrived another servant from Fasil to the queen, desiring that Powuffen and Gusho might halt at Emfras, adding, that he had just then begun his march from Buré, and would be at Gondar in a few days. Gusho and Powuffen did accordingly halt there, and were detained for the space of six weeks, amused by false pretences and messages, in very uncomfortable quarters, till their armies disbanded, the soldiers, from hunger and constant rains, deserted their leaders, and went every man to his home.

In the beginning of August the queen came to Gondar, and sat on the throne all day. She had not been there these three years, and I sincerely wished she had not gone then. It was in meditation that day to chuse a new king; she was present at that deliberation, and her intention was known to place a son of Aylo, Joas's brother, a mere infant, upon the throne. All those that were in fear of Michael, and it was very general at that time,

time, cried out against an infant king at such a critical period ; but, old as that princess was, the desire of reigning had again returned.

Upon the return of the Iteghé that night to Koscam, Sanuda held a council of the principal officers that had remained at Gondar, and fixed upon one Welleta Girgis, a young man of about 24 years of age, who had, indeed, been reputed Yafous's son, but his low life and manners had procured him safety and liberty by the contempt they had raised in Ras Michael. His mother, indeed, was of a noble origin, but so reduced in fortune as to have been obliged to gain her livelihood by carrying jars of water for hire. The mother swore this son was begot by Yafous, and as that prince was known not to have been very nice in his choice of mistresses, or limited in their number, it was, perhaps, as likely to be true as not, that Welleta Girgis was his son. He took the name of Socinios. On the morning after, the new king came to Koscam, attended by Sanuda and his party, with guards, and all the ensigns of royalty. He threw himself at the Iteghé's feet, and begged her forgiveness if he had vindicated the right of his birth, without her leave or participation ; he declared his resolution to govern entirely by her advice, and begged her to grant his request and come to Gondar, and again take possession of her place as Iteghé, or regent of the kingdom.

It

It was about the 10th of August that an accident happened, which it was generally thought would have determined Fasil to come to Gondar. A common woman, wife of a Galla at Tchelga, a town upon the frontiers of Sennaar, being at variance with her husband, upbraided him with being the person that, with his own hand, had assassinated the late king Joas. This Galla was immediately seized and sent to Gondar, and was examined before the queen, where I was present. He, with very little hesitation, declared, That, on a night immediately after the battle of Azazo, he was sent for to Ras Michael, who gave him some money and large promises, on condition that he would undertake to murder the king that night. The persons present were Laeca Netcho, and his two sons, Nebrit Tecla and his two sons, Shalaka Becro relation to the present king, and Woldo Hawaryat a monk of Tigré. The prisoner said, he was afraid, if he should refuse, they would murder him for the sake of secrecy. He further said, that they had given him spirits to drink till he was intoxicated, and then delivered to him the keys of the apartments where Joas was confined, and they all went with him to the palace; they found the unfortunate king alone, walking in his apartment, very pensive, and, though at the late hour of twelve at night, dressed in his usual habit. Two of Laeca Netcho's sons attempted to put a cord round his neck, but the king, being young and strong, shewed a disposition to defend himself,

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and

and wrested the cord out of the murderers hands ; upon which Zor Woldo (the name of the Galla) struck him a violent blow with a bludgeon on the head, which felled him to the dround : The others then, with a short cord, strangled him, the monk, Woldo Hawaryat, crying, dispatch him quickly ; after this they carried the body to the neighbouring church of St. Raphael, where a grave, or rather hole, was ready, into which they threw it with the clothes just as he was. The prisoner said, That, when they were carrying the king's body out of the palace into the church-yard, over a breach in the church-yard wall, they were challenged by a person, who asked them what they were about ? to which they replied, Burying a stranger who died that day of a pestilential fever.

Immediately upon this confession, the Galla was carried out and hanged upon the daroo-tree before the king's gate. Many condemned this hasty execution, but many likewise thought it prudent ; for he had already named a great part of the people about the queen as accessary to the death of her son.

I have said his name was Zor Woldo ; he was of the race of Galla, called Toluma, on the borders of Amhara ; he had been formerly a servant to Kasmati Becro ; was of small stature, thin and lightly made ; his complexion a yellowish black, and singularly ill-favoured. When under the tree, he acknowledged the murder of the king with

with absolute indifference ; nor did he desire any favour, or shew any fear of death. Zor Woldo's examination and declaration were sent immediately to Fasil, who, as usual, promised to come to Gondar quickly. The body of Joas was raised also, and laid in the church (in his clothes, just as he was dug up) upon a little straw ; his features were easily distinguishable, but some animal had ate part of his cheek.

The day after, I went from Koscam to Gondar without acquainting the Iteghé, and took a Greek called Petros with me ; he had been chamberlain to Joas. We went about eleven o'clock in the forenoon to the church of St. Raphael, expecting to have seen many as curious as ourselves, but, by reason of the atrociousness of the act, now for the first time known to be true, and the fear of Ras Michael threatening Gondar every day, not a living soul was there but a monk belonging to the church itself, who kept the key. It was thought criminal to know what it was apparent Michael had wished to conceal. Petros no sooner saw his master's face than, saying, It is he ! he ran off with all the speed possible : for my part, I was shocked at the indecent manner in which the body was exposed ; it affected me more than the murder itself, for it appeared as if it had been thrown down upon the ground, the head, arms, and legs lying in all sorts of directions, and great part of his haunch and thigh bare. I desired the monk to lock the door, and come along with me to Petros's

tros's house. Petros was a merchant who sold carpets, and such sort of goods used in the country, which he brought from Cairo. It was full an hour before we could make him behave sensibly, or deliver me a small Persian carpet, such as Mahometans use to pray upon, that is about seven feet long and four feet broad, and a web of coarse muslin, which I bought of him. I told the priest (for Petros absolutely refused to return to the church) how to lay the body decently upon the carpet, and to cover his face and every part with the muslin cloth, which might be lifted when any body came to see the corpse.

The priest received the carpet with great marks of satisfaction, and told me it was he who had challenged the murderers when carrying the body over the wall ; that he knew them well, and suspected they had been about some mischief ; and, upon hearing the king was missing the next day, he was firmly convinced it was his body that had been buried. Upon going also to the place early in the morning, he had found one of the king's toes, and part of his foot, not quite covered with earth, from the haste the murderers were in when they buried him ; these he had put properly out of sight, and constantly ever after, as he said, had watched the place in order to hinder the grave from being disturbed, or any other person being buried there.

About the beginning of October, Guebra Selassé, a servant of the king and one of the porters
in

in the palace, came on a message to the queen. It was a laconic one, but very easily understood. —“ Bury your boy, now you have got him ; or, when I come, I will bury him, and some of his relations with him.” Joas, upon this, was privately buried. As this Selassé was a favourite of mine, who took care of my shoes when I pulled them off to go into the audience-room, I waited impatiently for this messenger’s coming to my apartment, which he did late in the evening. I was alone, and he advanced so softly that I did not at first hear or know him ; but, when the door was shut, he began to give two or three capers ; and, pulling out a very large horn, “ Drink ! drink ! G—d d—n ! repeating this two or three times, and brandishing his horn over his head. Selassé, said I, have you lost your senses, or are you drunk ? you used to be a sober man.” —“ And so I am yet, says he, I have not tasted a morsel since noon ; and, being tired of running about on my affairs, I am now come to you for my supper, as I am sure you’ll not poison me for my master’s sake, nor for my own either, and I have now enemies enough in Gondar.” —“ I then asked, How is the king ?” —“ Did not you hear, said he—Drink !—the king told me to say this to you that you might know me to be a true messenger.” And an Irish servant of mine, opening the door in the instant, thinking it was I that called *drink !* Selassé adroitly continued, “ He knows you are curious in horns, and sent you this, desiring

ring me first to get it filled at the Iteghé's with good red wine, which I have done; and now, Hallo! Drink! Englishman!" He then added in a whisper, when the servant had shut the door, "I'll tell it you after supper, when the house is quiet, for I sleep here all night, and go to Tigré to-morrow morning."

The time being come, he informed me Ras Michael and Fasil had made peace; Welleta Michael, the Ras's nephew, taken by Fasil at the battle of Limjour, had been the mediator; that the king and Michael, by their wise behaviour, had reconciled Tigré as one man, and that the Ras had issued a proclamation, remitting to the province of Tigré their whole taxes from the day they passed the Tacazzé till that time next year, in consideration of their fidelity and services; and this had been solemnly proclaimed in several places by beat of drum. The Ras declared, at the same time, that he would, out of his own private fortune, without other assistance, bear the expence of the campaign till he seated the king on his throne in Gondar. A kind of madness, he said, had seized all ranks of people to follow their sovereign to the capital; that the mountain Haramat still held out; but that all the principal friends, both of Za Menfus and Netcho, had been up with the governors of that fortress offering terms of peace and forgiveness, and desiring they would not be an obstacle in the king's way, and a hinderance to his return, but that all terms had been

been as yet refused; however, says he, you know the Ras as well as I, he will play them a trick some of these days, winking with his eye, and then crying out, Drink!

I asked him if any notice had been taken of the carpet I had procured to cover the body of Joas, and hoped it had given no umbrage. He said, "No; none at all; on the contrary, the king had said twenty kind things upon it; that he was present also when a priest told it to Ras Michael, who only observed, Yagoube, who is a stranger in this country, is shocked to see a man taken out of his grave, and thrown like a dog upon the bare floor. This was all Michael said, and he never mentioned a word upon the subject afterwards;" nor did he, or the king, ever speak of it to me upon their return to Gondar.

The Itèghé, too, had much commended me, so did all the nobility, more than the thing deserved; for surely common humanity dictated thus much, and the fear of Michael, which I had not, was the only cause that so proper an action was left in a stranger's power. Even Ozoro Esther, enemy to Joas on account of the death of her husband Mariam Barea, after I had attended her one Sunday from church to the house of the Itèghé, and when she was set down at the head of a circle of all those that were of distinction at the court, called out aloud to me, as I was passing behind, and pointing to one of the most honourable seats in the room, said, Sit down there, Yagoube; God
has

has exalted you above all in this country, when he has put it in your power, though but a stranger, to confer charity upon the king of it. All was now acclamation, especially from the ladies ; and, I believe, I may fairly say, I had never in my life been a favourite of so many at any one time.

I dispatched Guëbra Selaffé with a message to the king, that I was resolved now to try once more a journey to the head of the Nile ; that I thought I should have time to be there, and return to Gondar, before the Tacazzé was fordable, soon after which I expected he would cross it, and that nothing but want of health would prevent me from joining him in Belessen, or sooner, if any opportunity should offer.

Before I took my last resolutions I waited upon the queen. She was exceedingly averse to the attempt ; she bade me remember what the last trial had cost me ; and begged me to defer any further thoughts of it till Fasil arrived in Gondar ; that she would then deliver me into his hands, and procure from him sure guides, together with a safe conduct. She bade me beware also of troops of Pagan Galla which were passing and repassing to and from his army, who, if they fell in with me, would murder me without mercy. She added, that the priests of Gojam and Damot were mortal enemies to all men of my colour, and, with a word, would raise the peasants against me. This was all true ; but then many reasons, which I had weighed well, concurred to shew that this opportunity,

tunity, dangerous as it was, might be the only time in which my enterprize could be practicable ; for I was confident a speedy rupture between Fafil and Michael would follow upon the king's return to Gondar. I determined therefore to set out immediately without farther loss of time.

C H A P. VIII.

*Second Journey to discover the Source of the Nile—
Favourable Turn of the King's Affairs in Tigré—
We fall in with Fasil's Army at Bamba.*

THOUGH the queen shewed very great dislike to my attempting this journey at such a time, yet she did not positively command the contrary; I was prepared, therefore, to leave Gondar the 27th of October 1770, and thought to get a few miles clear of the town, and then make a long stretch the next day. I had received my quadrant, time-keeper, and telescopes from the island of Mitraha, where I had placed them after the affair of Guebra Mehedin, and had now put them in the very best order.

But, about twelve o'clock, I was told a messenger from Ras Michael had arrived with great news from Tigré. I went immediately to Koscam as fast as I could gallop, and found there Guebra Christos, a man used to bring the jars of bouza to Ras Michael at his dinner and supper: low men are always

ways employed on such errands, that they may not, from their consequence excite a desire of vengeance. The message that he brought was to order bread and beer to be ready for 30,000 men who were coming with the king, as he had just decamped from before the mountain Haramat, which he had taken, and put Za Menfus to the sword, with every man that was in it: this message struck the queen with such a terror that she was not visible the whole day.

After asking the messenger if he had any word from the king to me, he said, "Very little;" that the king had called him to tell me he should soon begin his march by Belessen; and that he would send for me to meet him when he should arrive at Mariam-Ohha; he told me besides, that the king had got a stone for me with writing upon it of old times, which he was bringing to me; that it had been dug up at Axum, and was standing at the foot of his bed, but that he did not order him to tell me this, and had only learned it from the servants. My curiosity was very much raised to know what this stone could be, but I soon saw it was in vain to endeavour to learn any thing from Guebra Christos; he answered in the affirmative to every inquiry: when I asked if it was blue, it was blue; and if black, it was black; it was round, and square, and oblong, just as I put my question to him: all he knew about it at last, he said, was, that it cured all sort of sickness; and, if a man used it properly, it made him invulnera-

ble and immortal : he did not, however, pretend to warrant this himself, but swore he had the account from a priest of Axum who knew it. I was perfectly satisfied all further inquiry was unnecessary ; he had got a very plentiful portion of bouza from his friends, and was, I saw, fast engaged in the pursuit of more, so I gave him a small present for his good news, and took my leave, my mind being full of reflections upon the king's goodness, who, after such an absence, and in so critical a situation as he then was, still remembered the trifling pursuits in which he had seen me often engaged.

In the afternoon I received a message from Ozo-ro Esther, as brought to her by a servant of Ras Michael. It seems the giving up the king's revenue due from Tigré, and all sort of taxes upon the inhabitants, had interested the whole province so strongly, that all of them, as one man, endeavoured to remove the obstacle which stood in the way of the king's return : Michael, moreover, offered peace and pardon to the rebels, certain compensations, and an amnesty of all that was past. All the friends, both of Netcho and Za Menfus, and the other leaders upon the mountain, endeavoured to persuade them to accept the terms offered, whilst all the priests and hermits, eminent for sanctity, became as mediators between them and Ras Michael : this intercourse, though it had no effect upon Za Menfus, had seduced Netcho, and opened a large field for treachery.

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In the midst of this treaty, Kefla Yafous, with a detachment of chosen men, in a very stormy night, was appointed to ascend up a private path to that of the mountain where Netcho kept the principal guard, and being admitted, found the garrison mostly asleep; he surprised and obliged them to surrender, with very little bloodshed; Za Menfus was taken prisoner, and, while Kefla Yafous conducted him to the camp, was met by Guebra Mascal, who thrust him through with a lance, as a retaliation for his father's death. Netcho and the rest of the garrison being pardoned, all joined Ras Michael's army. I looked upon these news as a good omen, and experienced a degree of confidence and composure of mind to which I for a long time had been a stranger. I slept sound that night, and it was not till half after nine in the morning that I was ready for my journey.

In the evening before, I had endeavoured to engage my old companion Strates to accompany me on this attempt as he had done on the former; but the recollection of past dangers and sufferings was not yet banished from his mind; and upon my asking him to go and see the head of this famous river, he coarsely, according to his stile, answered, Might the devil fetch him if ever he fought either his head or his tail again.

It was on the 28th of October, at half past nine in the morning, that we left Gondar, and passed the river Kahha at the foot of the town; our route

was W. S. W. the road a little rugged upon the side of a hill, but the day was fair, with sunshine; and a small breeze from the north had risen with the sun, and made the temperature of the air perfectly agreeable. We left the church of Ledeta about a mile on the right, and passed by several poor villages called Abba Samuel; thence we came to the small river Shimfa, then to the Dumaza, something larger. Upon the banks of this river, very pleasantly situated, is Azazo, a country-house built by the late king Yafous, who often retired here to relax himself with his friends. It is surrounded, I may say covered, with orange-trees, so as to be scarcely seen; the trees are grown very large and high; they are planted without order, the only benefit expected from them being the shade. At some small distance is the village Azazo, originally built for the accommodation of the king's servants while he resided there, but now chiefly occupied by monks belonging to the large church of Tecla Haimanout, which is on a little hill adjoining. Azazo, though little, is one of the most cheerful and pleasant villages in the neighbourhood of Gondar. The lemon-tree seems to thrive better and grow higher than the orange; but the house itself is going fast to ruin, as the kings of this country have a fixed aversion to houses built by their predecessors.

The Dumaza is a very clear and pleasant stream, running briskly over a small bed of pebbles: both this river and the Shimfa come from Woggora on
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the N. W. they pass the hill of Koscam, called Debra Tzai, join below Azazo, and, traversing the flat country of Dembea, they meet the Angrab, which passes by Gondar, and with it fall into the Tacazzè, or Atbara.

At noon we passed a small rivulet called Azzargiha, and, soon after, the Chergué, where there began a most violent storm of rain, which forced us, much against our will, into the village, one of the most miserable I ever entered; it consisted of small hovels built with branches of trees, and covered with thatch of straw. These rains that fall in the latter season are what the natives very much depend upon, and without which they could not sow the latter crops; for, though it rains violently every day from May to the beginning of September, by the end of October the ground is so burnt that the country would be unfit for culture.

Our quarters here were so bad that we were impatient to depart, but came to a water just below Chergué, which quickly made us wish ourselves back in the village; this is a torrent that has no springs in the hills, but only great basins, or reservoirs, of stone; and, though it is dry all the year else, yet, upon a sudden violent shower, as this was, it swells in an instant, so that it is impassable for man or horse by any device whatever. This violence is of short duration; we waited above half an hour, and then the peasants shewed us a place, some hundred yards above, where it was shallower;

shallower; but even here we passed with the utmost difficulty, from the impetuosity of the stream, after getting all possible assistance from four people of the village; but we stood very much in need of some check to our impatience, so eager were we to get forward and finish our journey before some revolution happened.

We had not many minutes been delivered from this torrent, before we passed two other rivers, the one larger, the other smaller. All these rivers come from the north-west, and have their sources in the mountains a few miles above, towards Woggora, from which, after a short course on the side of the hills, they enter the low, flat country of Dembea, and are swallowed up in the Tzana.

We continued along the side of the hill in a country very thinly inhabited; for, it being directly in the march of the army, the peasants naturally avoided it, or were driven from it. Our road was constantly intersected by rivers, which abound, in the same space, more than in any other country in the world. We then came to the river Derma, the largest and most rapid we had yet met with, and soon after a smaller, called Ghelghel Derma. In the afternoon, at a quarter past three, we passed another river, called Gavi-Corra; these, like the others, all point as radii to the center of the lake, in which they empty themselves. A little before four o'clock we encamped on the side of the river Kemonia. Upon the hill, on the
other

other side of the river, stands the village of that name; it was full of cattle, very few of which we had seen during the fore-part of the journey; we had all that day travelled six hours and a quarter, which we computed not to exceed 14 miles: the reason of this slowness was the weight of my quadrant, which, though divided into two, required four men to carry it, tied upon bamboo, as upon two chair-poles. The time-keeper and two telescopes employed two men more. We pitched our tent on the side of the river, opposite to the village, and there passed the night.

On the 29th of October, at seven in the morning, we left our station, the river Kemona; our direction was W. S. W. after, about an hour, we came to a church called Abba Abraham, and a village that goes by the same name; it is immediately upon the road on the left hand. At the distance of about a mile are ten or twelve villages, all belonging to the Abuna, and called Ghendi, where many of his predecessors have been buried. the low, hot, unwholesome, woody part of the Abyssinian Kolla, and the feverish, barren province of Walkayt, lay at the distance of about fourteen or sixteen miles on our right. We had been hitherto ascending a gentle rising ground in a very indifferent country, the sides of the hill being skirted with little rugged wood, and full of springs, which join as they run down to the low country of Walkayt. We saw before us a small hill called Guarre, which is to the south-west.

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At half past ten we rested under the before-mentioned hill ; it stands alone in the plain, in shape like a sugar-loaf, and seems almost as regular as if it had been a work of art. At a quarter past eleven we resumed our journey, our course always nearly west south-west ; we passed the small village of Bowiha, at the distance of about a mile ; and, on the left, about six miles, is Gorgora, a peninsula that runs into the lake Tzana for several miles.

There was one of the first and most magnificent churches and monasteries of the Portuguese Jesuits, in the time of their mission to convert this country : Socinios, then king, gave them the grounds, with money for the expence ; they built it with their own hands, and lined it elegantly with cedar. The king, who was a zealous Roman Catholic, chose afterwards a country-house for himself there, and encouraged them much by his presents and by his charity ; it is one of the pleasantest situations in the world ; the vast expanse of the lake is before you ; Dembea, Gojam, and Maitsha, flat and rich countries all round, are in view ; and the tops of the high hills of Begemder and Woggora close the prospect.

The lake here, I am told, has plenty of fish, which is more than can be said for many of the other parts of it ; the fish are of two kinds, both of them seemingly a species of what the English call *bream*. I never could make them to agree with me, which I attribute to the drug with which they are taken ; it is of the nature of *nux vomica*,
pounded

pounded in a mortar, and thrown into streams, where they run into the lake; the fish, feeding there, are thus intoxicated and taken; however, it would admit of a doubt of this being the reason, because the queen and all the great people in Gondar eat them in Lent without any bad consequences.

The great elevation of the peninsula of Gorgora makes it one of the healthiest, as well as beautiful parts of the country; for, out of this neck of land, at several different seasons of the year, the inhabitants of the flat country suffer from malignant fevers. From Gondar hither we had always been edging down to the lake.

At a quarter before noon we halted to rest upon the banks of a small river called Baha; the country was rich, and cultivated; great part of it, too, was laid out in pasture, and stocked with an immense quantity of cattle. At one o'clock we resumed our journey, going west south-west as before; we were apparently turning the north end of the lake as short as possible, to set our face due south to the country of the Agows. At a quarter before three we pitched our tents at Bab Baha, after having travelled five hours and three quarters, which we computed to be equal to twelve miles. The first part of our journey this day was not like that of the day before; the road was, indeed, rough, but led through very agreeable valleys and gentle-rising hills; it appeared, on the whole,

whole, however, that we had ascended considerably since we left Gondar.

The country about Bab Baha is the richest in Abyssinia; this on the south, and Woggora on the north, are the two granaries that supply the rest of the kingdom. Bab Baha is a parcel of small villages, more considerable in number and strength than those at Kemona, and is near the lake Tzana. The queen and many of her relations have here their houses and possessions, and these, therefore, being respected by Michael, had not been involved in the devastation of the late war. The villages are all surrounded with Kol-quall trees, as large at the trunk as those we met on the side of the mountain of Taranta, when we ascended it on our journey from Masuah to enter into the province of Tigré; but the tree wants much of the beauty of those of Tigré; the branches are fewer in number, less thorny, and less indented, which seems to prove that this is not the climate for them.

The 30th of October, at six in the morning, we continued our journey from Bab Baha still rounding the lake at W. S. W. and on the very brink of it: the country is here all laid out in large meadows of a deep, black, rich soil, bearing very high grass, through the midst of which runs the river Sar-Ohha, which, in English, is the Grassy River; it is about forty yards broad and not two feet deep, has a soft clay bottom, and runs from north to south into the lake Tzana.

We

We turned out of the road to the left at Bab Baha, and were obliged to go up the hill; in a quarter of an hour we reached the high road to Mescala Christos. At seven o'clock we began to turn more to the southward, our course being S. W.; three miles and a half on our right remained the village of Tenkel; and four miles and a half that of Tihemmera to the N. N. W.; we were now close to the border of the lake, whose bottom here is a fine sand. Neither the fear of crocodiles, nor other monsters in this large lake, could hinder me from swimming in it for a few minutes. Though the sun was very warm, the water was intensely cold, owing to the many fresh streams that pour themselves continually into the lake Tzana from the mountains. The country here is sown with dora, which is maize, or millet; and another plant, not to be distinguished from our marigold either in size, shape, or foliage; it is called Nook*, and furnishes all Abyssinia with oil for the kitchen, and other uses.

At a quarter past nine we rested a little at Delghi Mariam; the village called simply Delghi, adjoining to it, is but small, and on the S. W. is the hill of Goy Mariam, where the queen-mother has a house. All the habitations in this country were burnt by Ras Michael in his return to Gondar after the battle of Fagitta. The mountain Debra Tzai above Koscam, was seen this day at N. E. and by E. from us.

* *Polymnia frondosa*.

At a quarter past ten we again set out, our route being S. W. at eleven we left the small village Arrico, about two miles on our right. At a quarter past eleven we halted to rest our men; we passed the church of St. Michael on our right, and at a quarter past one we passed two small islands in the lake, called Kedami Aret; and, half an hour after, we passed a small river, and came to Mescala Christos, a large village upon a high mountain, the summit of which it occupies entirely; it is surrounded on both sides by a river, and the descent is steep and dangerous. We thought to have staid here all night; but, after mounting the hill with great fatigue and trouble, we found the whole village abandoned, on intelligence that Waragna Fasil was on his march to Gondar, and not far distant.

This intelligence, which came all at once upon us, made us lay aside the thoughts of sleeping that night; we descended the hill of Mescala Christos in great haste, and with much difficulty, and came to the river Kemon below it, clear and limpid, but having little water, running over a bed of very large stones. This river too, comes from the north-west, and falls into the lake a little below; we rested on its banks half an hour, the weather being very sultry; from this place we had a distinct view of the Nile, where, after crossing the lake, it issues out near Dara, the scene of our former misfortunes; we set it carefully by the compass, and it bore nearly S. W.

We

We began our journey again at three quarters after two, and at half after three we passed a river, very clear, with little water, the name of which I have forgot; by the largeness of its bed it seemed to be a very considerable stream in winter; at present it had very little water, but a fine gravelly bottom; here we met multitudes of peasants flying before the army of Fasil, many of whom, seeing us, turned out of the way; one of these was a servant of Guebra Ehad, brother to Ayto Aylo, my most intimate friend: he told us it was very possible that Fasil would pass us that night, advised us not to linger in the front of such an army, but fall in as soon as possible with his Fit-Auraris, rather than any other of his advanced posts; he was carrying a message to his master's brother at Gondar. I told him I had rather linger in the front of such an army than in the rear of it, and should be very sorry to be detained long, even in the middle of it; that I only wished to salute Fasil, and procure a pass and recommendations from him to Agow Midre.

Ayto Aylo's servant, who was with me, presently made acquaintance with this man, and I trusted him to learn from him as much as he knew about Fasil; the result was, that Fasil pretended to be in a violent hurry, from what motive was not known; but that he, at the same time, marched very slowly, contrary to his usual custom; that his speech and behaviour promised peace, and that he had hurt nobody on the way, but proclaimed constantly, that all people should keep their houses

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without

without fear; that Ayto Woldo of Maitsha, a great robber, was his Fit-Auraris, and never distant from him more than three miles; that the troops of Agow, Maitsha, and Damot, were with him, and with some Galla of Gojam and Metchakel composed the van and center of his army, whilst his rear consisted of wild lawless Galla, whom he had brought from the other side of the Nile from Bizamo, his own country, and were commanded by Ayto Wellela Yafous, his great confident; that these Galla were half a day generally behind him, and there was some talk that, the same day, or the next, he was to send these invaders home; that he marched as if he was in fear; always took strong posts, but had received every body that came to him, either from the country or Gondar, affably and kindly enough, but no one knew any thing of his intentions.

About half past four o'clock we fell in with Woldo, his Fit-Auraris, whom I did not know. Ayto Aylo's servant, however, was acquainted with him; we asked him some questions about his master, which he answered very candidly and discreetly; on his part he made no inquiry, and seemed to have little curiosity about us; he had taken his post, and was advancing no farther that night. I made him a little present at taking my leave, which he seemed surprised at; and, very much contrary to my expectations, had some difficulty about receiving, saying, he was ashamed that he had not any return for us; that he was a soldier,

dier, and had nothing but the lance in his hand and the goat's skin on his shoulders, neither of which he could be sure to possess for twenty-four hours; he then told us that Fasil had, by that time, pitched his tent at Bamba, within a mile of us, and was to dispatch the wild Galla from thence to their own country: he gave us a man who, he said, would take care of us, and desired us not to dismiss him till we had seen Fasil, and not to pitch our tent, but rather to go into one of the empty houses of Bamba, as all the people had fled. We now parted equally contented with each other; at the same time I saw he sent off another man, who went swiftly on, probably to carry advice of us to Fasil: we had staid with him something less than half an hour.

C H A P. IX.

Interview with Fasil—Transactions in the Camp.

WE found Bamba a collection of villages, in a valley now filled with soldiers. We went to the left with our guide, and got a tolerable house, but the door had been carried away. Fasil's tent was pitched a little below us, larger than the others, but without further distinction: it was easily known, however, by the lights about it, and by the nagareet, which still continued beating: he was then just alighting from his horse. I immediately sent Ayto Aylo's servant, whom I had with me, to present my compliments, and acquaint him of my being on the road to visit him. I thought now all my difficulties were over: for I knew it was in his power to forward us to our journey's end; and his servants, whom I saw at the palace near the king, when Fasil was invested with his command, had assured me, not only of an effectual protection, but also of a magnificent reception if I chanced to find him in Maitsha.

It

It was now, however, near eight at night of the 30th before I received a message to attend him. I repaired immediately to his tent. After announcing myself, I waited about a quarter of an hour before I was admitted; he was sitting upon a cushion with a lion's skin upon it, and another stretched like a dirty towel, wrapped about his head; his upper cloak, or garment, was drawn tight about him over his neck and shoulders, so as to cover his hands; I bowed, and went forward to kiss one of them, but it was so entangled in the cloth that I was obliged to kiss the cloth instead of the hand. This was done either as not expecting I should pay him that compliment, (as I certainly should not have done, being one of the king's servants, if the king had been at Gondar) or else it was intended for a mark of disrespect, which was very much of a piece with the rest of his behaviour afterwards.

There were no carpets or cushions in the tent, and only a little straw, as if accidentally, thrown thinly about it. I sat down upon the ground, thinking him sick not knowing what all this meant; he looked stedfastly at me, saying, half under his breath, Endett nawi? bogo nawi? which, in Amharic, is, How do you do? Are you very well? I made the usual answer, Well, thank God. He again stopt, as for me to speak; there was only one old man present, who was sitting on the floor mending a mule's bridle. I took him at first for an attendant, but observing that a servant un-

covered held a candle to him, I thought he was one of his Galla, but then I saw a blue filk thread, which he had about his neck, which is a badge of Christianity all over Abyffinia, and which a Galla would not wear. What he was I could not make out; he seemed, however, to be a very bad cobbler, and took no notice of us.

Ayto Aylo's fervant, who stood behind me, pushed me with his knee, as a sign that I should speak, which I accordingly began to do with some difficulty. "I am come, said I, by your invitation, and the king's leave, to pay my respects to you in your own government, begging that you would favour my-curiosity so far as to suffer me to see the country of the Agows, and the source of the Abay, or Nile, part of which I have seen in Egypt." "The source of the Abay! exclaimed he, with a pretended surprife, do you know what you are faying? Why, it is, God knows where, in the country of the Galla, wild, terrible people. The source of the Abay! Are you raving! repeats he again: Are you to get there, do you think, in a twelvemonth, or more, or when?" "Sir, said I, the king told me it was near Sacala, and still nearer Geesh; both villages of the Agows, and both in your government." "And so you know Sacala and Geesh? fays he, whistling and half angry*." "I can repeat the names that I hear,

* This affected ignorance was probably intended to bring me to mention the donation the king had given me of Geesh, which he never much relished, and made effectually useless to me.

said

said I; all Abyssinia knows the head of the Nile." "Aye, says he, imitating my voice and manner, but all Abyssinia won't carry you there, that I promise you." "If you are resolved to the contrary, said I, they will not; I wish you had told the king so in time, then I should not have attempted it; it was relying upon you alone I came so far, confident, if all the rest of Abyssinia could not protect me there, that your word singly could do it."

He now put on a look of more complacency. "Look you, Yagoube, says he, it is true I can do it; and, for the king's sake who recommended it to me, I would do it; but the Acab Saat, Abba Salama, has sent to me, to desire me not to let you pass further; he says it is against the law of the land to permit Franks like you to go about the country, and that he has dreamed something ill will befall me if you into Maitsha." I was as much irritated as I thought it possible for me to be. "So so, said I, the time of priests, prophets, and dreamers is coming on again." "I understand you, says he laughing for the first time; I care as little for priests as Michael does, and for prophets too, but I would have you consider the men of this country are not like yours; a boy of these Galla would think nothing of killing a man of your country. You white people are all effeminate; you are like so many women; you are not fit for going into a province where all is war, and inhabited by men, warriors from their cradle."

I saw he intended to provoke me; and he had succeeded so effectually that I should have died, I believe, imprudent as it was, if I had not told him my mind in reply. "Sir, said I, I have passed through many of the most barbarous nations in the world; all of them, excepting this clan of yours, have some great men among them above using a defenceless stranger ill. But the worst and lowest individual among the most uncivilized people never treated me as you have done to-day under your own roof, where I have come so far for protection." He asked, "How?" "You have, in the first place, said I, publicly called me Frank, the most odious name in this country, and sufficient to occasion me to be stoned to death without further ceremony, by any set of men wherever I may present myself. By Frank you mean one of the Romish religion, to which my nation is as adverse as yours; and again, without having ever seen any of my countrymen but myself, you have discovered, from that specimen, that we are all cowards and effeminate people, like, or inferior to, your boys or women. Look you, Sir, you never heard that I gave myself out as more than an ordinary man in my own country, far less to be a pattern of what is excellent in it. I am no soldier, though I know enough of war to see yours are poor proficient in that trade. But there are soldiers, friends and countrymen of mine, (one presents himself to my mind at this instant,)

instant *,) who would not think it an action in his life to vaunt of, that with 500 men he had trampled all yon naked savages into dust. On this Fafil feigned to laugh, and seemed rather to take my freedom amiss. It was, doubtless, a passionate and rash speech. As to myself, continued I, unskilled in war as I am, could it be now without further consequence, let me but be armed in my own country-fashion on horseback, as I was yesterday, I should, without thinking myself over-matched, fight the best two horsemen you shall choose from this your army of famous men, who are warriors from their cradle; and if, when the king arrives, you are not returned to your duty, and we meet again, as we did at Limjour, I will pledge myself, with his permission, to put you in mind of this promise. This did not make things better.

He repeated the word *duty* after me, and would have replied, but my nose burst out in a stream of blood; and, that instant, Aylo's servant took hold of me by the shoulder to hurry me out of the tent. Fafil seemed to be a good deal concerned, for the blood streamed out upon my clothes. The old man likewise assisted me when out of the tent; I found he was Guebra Ehud, Ayto Aylo's brother, whose servant we had met on the road. I returned then to my tent, and the blood was soon staunch'd by washing my face with cold water.

* It is with pleasure I confess the man then in my mind was my brave friend Sir William Erskine.

I sat down to recollect myself, and the more I calmed, the more I was dissatisfied at being put off my guard; but it is impossible to conceive the provocation without having proved it. I have felt but too often how much the love of our native soil increases by our absence from it; and how jealous we are of comparisons made to the disadvantage of our countrymen by people who, all proper allowances being made, are generally not their equals, when they would boast themselves their superiors. I will confess further, in gratification to my critics, that I was, from my infancy, of a sanguine, passionate disposition; very sensible of injuries that I had neither provoked nor deserved; but much reflection, from very early life, continued habits of suffering in long and dangerous travels, where nothing but patience would do, had, I flattered myself, abundantly subdued my natural proneness to feel offences, which, common sense might teach me, I could only revenge upon myself.

However, upon further consulting my own breast, I found there was another cause had cooperated strongly with the former in making me lose my temper at this time, which, upon much greater provocation, I had never done before. I found now, as I thought, that it was decreed decisively my hopes of arriving at the source of the Nile were for ever ended; all my trouble, all my expences, all my time, and all my sufferings for so many years were thrown away, from no greater obstacle than the whimsies of one barbarian, whose
good

good inclinations, I thought, I had long before sufficiently secured; and, what was worse, I was now got within less than forty miles of the place I so much wished to see; and my hopes were shipwrecked upon the last, as well as the most unexpected, difficulty I had to encounter.

I was just going to bed when Ayto Welleta Michael, Ras Michael's nephew, taken at Limjour, and a prisoner with Fasil, though now at large, came into the tent. I need not repeat the discourse that passed between us, it was all condolence upon the ill usage I had met with. He cursed Fasil, called him a thousand opprobrious names, and said, Ras Michael one day would shew me his head upon a pole: he hinted, that he thought Fasil expected a present, and imagined that I intended to pass the king's recommendation on him in the place of it. I have a present, said I, and a very handsome one, but I never thought that, while his nagareet was still beating, and when he had scarcely pitched his tent when he was tired, and I no less so, that it was then a time to open my baggage for this purpose; if he had waited till to-morrow, he should have had a gratification which would have contented him.

Well, well, said Welleta Michael, as for your journey I shall undertake for that, for I heard him giving orders about it when I came away, even though he expects no present; what does the gratifying your curiosity cost him? he would be ashamed to refuse you permission; his own vanity
would

would hinder him. This assurance, more than all the quieting draughts in the world, composed my mind, and brought me to myself. I went to bed, and falling into a sound sleep, was waked near mid-night by two of Fasil's servants, who brought each of them a lean live sheep; they said they had brought the sheep, and were come to ask how I was, and to stay all night to watch the house for fear of the thieves in the army; they likewise brought their master's order for me to come early in the morning to him, as he wanted to dispatch me on my journey before he gave the Galla liberty to return. This dispelled every doubt, but it raised my spirits so much, that, out of impatience for morning, I slept very little more that night.

It was a time of year when it is not broad day till after six o'clock; I went to the camp and saw Guebra Ehud, who confirmed what Welleta Michael had said, and that Fasil had given orders for bringing several of his own horses for me, to choose which he was to present me with; in effect there were about twelve horses all saddled and bridled, which were led by a master-groom. I was very indifferent about these horses, having a good one of my own, and there was none of these that would in this country have brought 7l. at a market; the servant, who seemed very officious, pitched upon a bright-bay poney, the fattest of the whole, but not strong enough in appearance to carry me; he assured me, however, the horse
had

had excellent paces, was a great favourite of Fafil's, but too *dull* and *quiet* for him, and desired me to mount him, though he had no other furniture but the wooden part of a saddle covered with thin, brown leather, and, instead of stirrups, iron rings. All the Abyssinians, indeed, ride barefooted and legged, and put only their great toe into the iron ring, holding it betwixt their great and second toe, as they are afraid of being entangled by the stirrup if their horse falls, should they put their foot into it.

I consented to try him very willingly. A long experience with the Moors in Barbary put me above fear of any horse, however vicious, which I had no reason to think this was; besides, I rode always with a Barbary bridle, broad stirrups, and short stirrup leathers, after their fashion; the bridle is known to every scholar in horsemanship, and should be used by every light-horseman or dragoon, for the most vicious horse cannot advance a yard against this bridle, when in a strong hand. I ordered the seis, or groom, to change the saddle and bridle for mine, and I had on a pair of spurs with very long and sharp rowels. I saw presently the horse did not like the bit, but that I did not wonder at; my saddle was what was called a war saddle, high behind and before, so, unless the horse fell, it was impossible to throw the rider. I had also a thick, knotty stick, or truncheon, of about three feet long, instead of a whip, and well was it for me I was so prepared for him.

For

For the first two minutes after I mounted I do not know whether I was most on the earth or in the air; he kicked behind, reared before, leaped like a deer, all four off the ground, and it was some time before I recollected myself; he then attempted to gallop; and, finding I slacked the bridle on his neck, and that he was at ease, he set off and ran away as hard as he could, flinging out behind every ten yards; the ground was very favourable, smooth, soft, and up-hill. We passed the post of the Fit-Auraris like lightning, leaving him exceedingly surprised at seeing me make off with his master's horse. He was then going to the head quarters, but said nothing at passing; we went down one hill awkwardly enough; and, when we got to a small plain and a brook below, the horse would have gone easily enough either a trot or walk up the other, but I had only to shake my stirrups to make him set off again at a violent gallop, and when he stopt he trembled all over. I was now resolved to gain a victory, and hung my upper cloak upon a tree, the attempting which occasioned a new battle; but he was obliged to submit. I then between the two hills, half up the one and half up the other, wrought him so that he had no longer either breath or strength, and I began to think he would scarce carry me to the camp.

I now found that he would walk very quietly; that a gentle touch of the spur would quicken him, but that he had not strength or inclination to gallop;

lop ; and there was no more rearing or kicking up behind. I put my cloak, therefore, about me in the best manner possible, just as if it had never been ruffled or discomposed by motion, and in this manner repassing the Fit Auraris' quarters, came in sight of the camp, where a large field sown with teff, and much watered, was in front. I went out of the road into this field, which I knew was very soft and deep, and therefore favourable for me. Coming near Fasil's tent, the horse stooped upon gently straitening the bridle, as a horse properly broke would have done, on which my servant took the saddle and bridle, and returned the groom his own.

The poor beast made a sad figure, cut in the sides to pieces, and bleeding at the jaws ; and the seis, the rascal that put me upon him, being there when I dismounted, he held up his hands upon seeing the horse so mangled, and began to testify great surprise upon the supposed harm I had done. I took no notice of this, only said, Carry that horse to your master ; he may venture to ride him now, which is more than either he or you dared to have done in the morning.

As my own horse was bridled and saddled, and I found myself violently irritated, I resolved to ride to compose myself a little before another interview, for I thought this last piece of treachery, that might have cost me my legs and arms, was worse than what passed in the tent the night before ; it seemed to be aimed at my life, and to put
a very

a very effectual stop to my continuing my journey. My servant had in his hand a short-barrelled gun loaded with shot for killing any uncommon bird we might see by the way. I took the gun and my horse, and went up the side of the green hill about half way, in fair view of the camp, and considerably above it, I galloped, trotted, and made my horse perform every thing he was capable of. He was excellent in his movements, and very sufficiently trained ; this the Galla beheld at once with astonishment and pleasure ; they are naturally fond of horses, sufficiently perfect in the useful part of horsemanship, to be sensible of the beauty of the ornamental.

There was then, as there always is, a vast number of kites following the camp, which are quite familiar and live upon the carrion ; choosing two gliding near me, I shot first one on the right, then one on the left ; they both fell dead on the ground ; a great shout immediately followed from the spectators below, to which I seemingly paid no attention, pretending absolute indifference, as if nothing extraordinary had been done. I then dismounted from my horse, giving him and my gun to my servant, and, sitting down on a large stone, I began to apply some white paper to staunch a small scratch the first horse had given me on the leg, by rubbing it against a thorn tree : as my trowsers, indeed, were all stained with the blood of the first horse, much cut by the spur, it was generally thought I was wounded.

Fasil

Fafil on this sent for me to come immediately to him, having just got up from a sleep after a whole night's debauch. He was at the door of the tent when I began riding my own horse, and, having seen the shots, ordered the kites immediately to be brought him : his servants had laboured in vain to find the hole where the ball, with which I had killed the birds, had entered ; for none of them had ever seen small-shot, and I did not undeceive them. I had no sooner entered his tent than he asked me, with great earnestness, to shew him where the ball had gone through. I gave him no explanation ; but, if you have really an inclination to kill me, said I, you had better do it here, where I have servants that will bury me, and tell the King and the Iteghé the kind reception you have given strangers whom they have recommended. He asked what I meant ? What was the matter now ? and I was going to answer, when Welleta Michael told him the whole story, greatly in my favour, indeed, but truly and plainly as to the trick about the horse. The Fit-Auraris Woldo said something to him in Galla, which plainly made the matter worse. Fafil now seemed in a terrible fury, and said three words to the Fit-Auraris in Galla, who immediately went out ; and, as my servants told me afterwards, after sending for the seis, or groom, who had brought me the horse, the first salutation that he gave him was a blow over the head with a bludgeon, which felled him to the ground, then a dozen more strokes,

and

and ordered him to be put in irons, after which he returned into the tent.

Fafil, who heard I was hurt, and saw the quantity of blood upon my trowsers, held up his hands with a shew of horror and concern, which plainly was not counterfeited: he protested, by every oath he could devise, that he knew nothing about the matter, and was asleep at the time; that he had no horses with him worth my acceptance, except the one that he rode, but that any horse known to be his, driven before me, would be a passport, and procure me respect among all the wild people whom I might meet, and for that reason only he had thought of giving me a horse. He repeated his protestations that he was innocent, and heartily sorry for the accident, which, indeed, he appeared to be: he told me the groom was in irons, and that, before many hours passed, he would put him to death. I was perfectly satisfied with his sincerity. I wished to put an end to this disagreeable conversation: "Sir, said I, as this man has attempted my life, according to the laws of the country, it is I that should name the punishment." "It is very true, replied Fafil, take him, Yagoube, and cut him in a thousand pieces, if you please, and give his body to the kites." "Are you really sincere in what you say, said I, and will you have no after excuses?" He swore solemnly he would not. "Then, said I, I am a Christian: the way my religion teaches me to punish my enemies is by doing good for evil; and therefore I keep

keep you to the oath you have sworn, and desire my friend the Fit-Auraris to set the man at liberty, and put him in the place he held before, for he has not been undutiful to you."

I need not say what were the sentiments of the company, upon the occasion; they seemed to be most favourable to me; old Guebra Ehad could not contain himself, but got out of the dark corner, and squeezed both of my hands in his; and turning to Fasil, said, "Did not I tell you what my brother Aylo thought about this man?" Welleta Michael said, "He was just the same all through Tigré." Fasil, in a low voice, replied, "A man that behaves as he does may go through any country." They then all begged that I would take care of my wound, looking at the blood upon my trowsers. I told them it was already staunch-ed; and turning to Fasil, said, "We white people, you see, are not so terrified at seeing our own blood as you supposed we were." He then desired that the tent might be cleared for a short time, and we all went out.

About ten minutes after, I was called in to partake of a great breakfast; honey and butter, and raw beef in abundance, as also some stewed dishes that were very good. I was very hungry, having tasted nothing since dinner the day before; and I had had much exercise of body as well as of mind. We were all very chearful, every one saying something about the Agows, or of the Nile; and Fasil declaring, if it was peace, he would carry me

to his country across the Nile as far as the kingdom of Narea. I thanked him. "You are at peace, said I, with the King and the Ras, and going to meet them at Gondar."—"At Gondar, says he, no; I hope not this time; the Ras has work enough on his hands for the rest of his life." "What work? said I." "Why, the mountain," replies he. "The mountain Aromata!" "The same, says he; you never saw such a place; Lammalmon, and all the mountains of Abyssinia, are nothing to it: he was, when at the prime of life, fifteen years in taking it from this Netcho's father." "But he has been luckier this time, replied I, by fourteen years." "How!" says he, with some amazement. "Pardon me, said I, if I have unawares told you unwelcome news; but the mountain is taken, the garrison put to the sword, and Za Menfus, after surrendering, slain, in cold blood by Guebra Mascas, in revenge for the death of his father." Fasil had in his hand a blue cut-glass goblet, gilt round the edges with gold. I had bought it at Cairo, with several other articles of the same kind, from a merchant who procured them from Trieste. I had given it to the king, who drank out of it himself, and had sent it as an honourable token to Fasil from Dingleber, the day when they made peace, after the battle of Limjour. Upon hearing what I said, he threw it violently upon the ground, and broke it into a thousand pieces. "Take care what you say, Yagoube, says he, take care this be not a lie; tell it

it me again." I told him the whole circumstances from beginning to end; how the news had come to the Iteghé—who had brought the intelligence—how it had come from the Ras to Ozoro Esther—and how Kessa Yafous had surprised the mountain by treachery; having first lulled the besieged asleep by a negociation, and a proposed mediation of the priests and hermits. On this Fafil observed, it was the very way Michael took it last time; and, putting his forefinger in his mouth, bit it very hard, crying, Fool, fool, was he not warned? We all were again dismissed from the tent, and staid out about a quarter of an hour, when we were again called in.

I cannot say but I enjoyed heartily the fright I had visibly given him; it seemed to me that Aylo's brother, Guebra Ehud, was the only person whom he consulted, for it was he alone that remained with him in his tent when we entered; he had changed his dress; a man was combing his hair, and perfuming it; and he had a new, white, fine cotton cloth thrown about his middle loosely, which covered his legs and feet, his breasts, neck, and shoulders, being quite naked; he rose half up from his seat when I came in, made me sit down on a cushion beside him, and was going to speak, when I resolved to have the first word, for fear he should engage me in more discussions. "Your continual hurry, said I, all the times I have seen you, has put it out of my power till now to make you the acknowledgment it is ordinary for stran-

gers to present when they visit great men in their own country, and ask favours of them." I then took a napkin, and opened it before him; he seemed to have forgot the present altogether, but from that moment I saw his countenance changed, he was like another man. "O Yagoube, says he, a present to me! you should be sensible that is perfectly needless; you were recommended to me by the King and the Ras; you know, says he, we are friends, and I would do twenty times as much for yourself, without recommendation from either; I have not behaved to you like a great man."

It was not a very hard thing to conquer these scruples; he took the several pieces of the present one by one in his hands, and examined them; there was a crimson silk sash, made at Tunis, about five yards long, with a silk fringe of the same colour; it was as beautiful a web of silk as ever I saw; it had a small waved pattern wrought in it; the next was a yellow, with a red narrow border, or stripe, and a silver-wrought fringe, but neither so long nor so thick as the other; the next were two Cyprus manufactured sashes, silk and cotton, with a satin stripe, the one broader than the other, but five yards long each; the next was a Persian pipe, with a long pliable tube, or worm, covered with Turkey leather, with an amber mouth-piece, and a crystal vase for smoking tobacco through water, a great luxury in the eastern countries; the next were two blue bowls, as fine as the one he
had

had just then broken, and of the same sort. He shoved them from him, laughing, and said, "I will not take them from you, Yagoube; this is downright robbery; I have done nothing for this, which is a present for a king."—"It is a present to a friend, said I, often of more consequence to a stranger than a king; I always except your king, who is the stranger's best friend." "Though he was not easily disconcerted, he seemed, at this time, to be very nearly so." "If you will not receive them, continued I, such as they are offered, it is the greatest affront ever was put upon me; I can never, you know, receive them again."

By this he was convinced. More feeble arguments would indeed have satisfied him, and he folded up the napkin with all the articles, and gave them to an officer; after which the tent was again cleared for consultation; and, during this time, he had called his man of confidence, whom he was to send with us, and instructed him properly. I saw plainly that I had gained the ascendant; and, in the expectation of Ras Michael's speedily coming to Gondar, he was as willing to be on his journey the one way, as I was the other. I had ordered my servants and baggage to set out on the road to Dingleber before me, sending Ayto Aylo's servant along with them, leaving me only my horse and a common Abyssinian servant to follow them: all had been ready since early in the morning, and they had set out accordingly with very great alacrity.

It was about one o'clock, or after it, when I was admitted to Fafil : he received me with great complacency, and would have had me sit down on the same cushion with himself, which I declined. " Friend Yagoube, says he, I am heartily sorry that you did not meet me at Buré before I set out ; there I could have received you as I ought, but I have been tormented with a multitude of barbarous people, who have turned my head, and whom I am now about to dismiss. I go to Gondar in peace, and to keep peace there, for the king on this side the Tacazzé has no other friend than me ; Powuffen and Gusfo are both traitors, and so Ras Michael knows them to be. I have nothing to return you for the present you have given me, for I did not expect to meet a man like you here in the fields ; but you will quickly be back ; we shall meet on better terms at Gondar ; the head of the Nile is near at hand ; a horseman, express, will arrive there in a day. I have given you a good man, well known in this country to be my servant ; he will go to Geesh with you, and return you to a friend of Ayto Aylo's and mine, Shalaka Welled Amlac ; he has the dangerous part of the country wholly in his hands, and will carry you safe to Gondar ; my wife is at present in his house : fear nothing, I shall answer for your safety : When will you set out ? to-morrow ? "

I replied, with many thanks for his kindness, that I wished to proceed immediately, and that my servants were already far off, on the way. You
are

are going to dismiss those wild people, I would wish to be as clear of them as possible ; I intend to travel long journies, till we part (as I understand we shall do) from the route that they are taking.

You are very much in the right, says Fasil, it was only in the idea that you was hurt with that accursed horse that I would have wished you to stay till to-morrow ; but throw off these bloody clothes, they are not decent, I must give you new ones, you are my vassal. I bowed. The king has granted you Geesh, where you are going, and I must invest you. A number of his servants hurried me out ; Guebra Ehud, Welleta Michael, and the Fit-Auraris, attended me. I presently threw off my trowsers, and my two upper garments, and remained in my waistcoat ; these were presently replaced by new ones, and I was brought back in a minute to Fasil's tent, with only a fine loose muslin under garment or cloth round me, which reached to my feet. Upon my coming back to the tent, Fasil took off the one that he had put on himself new in the morning, and put it about my shoulders with his own hand, his servants throwing another immediately over him, saying at the same time to the people, " Bear witness, I give to you, Yagoube, the Agow Geesh, as fully and freely as the king has given it me." I bowed and kissed his hand, as is customary for feudatories, and he then pointed to me to sit down.

“Hear what I say to you, continued Fasil; I think it right for you to make the best of your way now, for you will be the sooner back at Gondar. You need not be alarmed at the wild people you speak of, who are going after you, though it is better to meet them coming this way, than when they are going to their homes; they are commanded by Welleta Yafous, who is your friend, and is very grateful for the medicines you sent him at Gondar: he has not been able to see you, being so much busied with those wild people; but he loves you, and will take care of you, and you must give me more of that physic when we meet at Gondar.” I again bowed, and he continued, —“Hear me what I say; you see those seven people (I never saw more thief-like fellows in my life),—these are all leaders and chiefs of the Galla—savages, if you please; they are all your brethren.” I bowed “You may go through their country as if it were your own, without a man hurting you: you will be soon related to them all; for it is their custom that a stranger of distinction, like you, when he is their guest, sleeps with the sister, daughter, or near relation of the principal men among them. I dare say, says he archly, you will not think the customs of the Galla contain greater hardships than those of Amhara.” I bowed, but thought to myself I shall not put them to the trial. He then jabbered something to them in Galla which I did not understand. They all answered

swered by the wildest howl I ever heard, and struck themselves upon the breast, apparently assenting.

“ When Ras Michael, continued he, came from the battle of Fagitta, the eyes of forty-four, brethren and relations of these people present, were pulled out at Gondar, the day after he arrived, and they were exposed upon the banks of the river Angrab to starve, where most, I believe, were devoured by the hyæna; you took three of them up to your house; nourished, cloathed, protected, and kindly treated them.” “ They are now in good health, said I, and want nothing: the Iteghé will deliver them to you. The only other thing I have done to them was, I got them baptised: I do not know if that will displease them; I did it as an additional protection to them, and to give them a title to the charity of the people of Gondar.” “ As for that, says he, they don’t care the least about baptism; it will neither do them good nor harm; they don’t trouble themselves about these matters; give them meat and drink, and you will be very welcome to baptise them all from morning to night; after such good care these Galla are all your brethren, they will die for you before they see you hurt.” He then said something to them in Galla again, and they all gave another assent, and made a shew of kissing my hand.

They sat down; and, I must own, if they entertained any good-will to me, it was not discernible in their countenances. “ Besides this, continued

nued Fasil, you was very kind and courteous to my servants while at Gondar, and said many favourable things of me before the king; you sent me a present also, and above all, when Joas my master's body was dug up from the church-yard of St. Raphael, and all Gondar were afraid to shew it the least respect, dreading the vengeance of Ras Michael, you, a stranger, who had never seen him, nor received benefit from him, at your own expence paid that attention to his remains which would have better become many at Gondar, and me in particular, had I been within reach, or had intelligence of the matter: now, before all these men, ask me any thing you have at heart, and, be it what it may, they know I cannot deny it you." He delivered this in a tone and gracefulness of manner, superior, I think, to any thing I had ever before seen, although the Abyssinians are all orators, as, indeed, are most barbarians. "Why then, said I, by all those obligations you are pleased to mention, of which you have made a recital so truly honourable to me, I ask you the greatest favour that man can bestow upon me—send me, as conveniently as possible, to the head of the Nile, and return me and my attendants in safety, after having dispatched me quickly, and put me under no constraint that may prevent me from satisfying my curiosity in my own way." "This, says he, is no request, I have granted it already; besides, I owe it to the commands of the king, whose servant I am. Since, however, it is so much at your heart,

heart, go in peace, I will provide you with all necessaries. If I am alive, and governor of Damot, as you are, we all know, a prudent and sensible man, unsettled as the state of the country is, nothing disagreeable can befall you.

He then turned again to his seven chiefs, who all got up, himself and I, Guebra Ehud, Welleta Michael, and the Fit-Auraris; we all stood round in a circle, and raised the palm of our hands, while he and his Galla together repeated a prayer about a minute long; the Galla seemingly with great devotion. Now, says Fasil, go in peace, you are a Galla; this is a curse upon them, and their children, their corn, grass, and cattle, if ever they lift their hand against you or yours, or do not defend you to the utmost, if attacked by others, or endeavour to defeat any design they may hear is intended against you." Upon this I offered to kiss his hand before I took my leave, and we all went to the door of the tent, where there was a very handsome grey horse bridled and saddled. "Take this horse, says Fasil, as a present from me; it is not so good as your own, but, depend upon it, it is not of the kind that rascal gave you in the morning; it is the horse which I rode upon yesterday, when I came here to encamp; but do not mount it yourself, drive it before you saddled and bridled as it is; no man of Maitsha will touch you when he sees that horse; it is the people of Maitsha whose houses Michael has burnt that you have to fear, and not your friends the Galla."

I then

I then took the most humble and respectful leave of him possible, and also of my new-acquired brethren the Galla, praying inwardly I might never see them again. I recommended myself familiarly and affectionately to the remembrance of Welleta Michael, the Ras's nephew, as well as Guebra Ehad; and turning to Fafil, according to the custom of the country to superiors, asked him leave to mount on horseback before him, and was speedily out of sight. Shalaka Woldo (the name of my guide) did not set out with me, being employed about some affairs of his own, but he presently after followed, driving Fafil's horse before him.



C H A P. X.

*Leave Bamba, and continue our Journey southward
—Fall in with Fasil's Pagan Galla—Encamp on
the Kelti.*

AT Bamba begins a valley full of small hills and trees, all brush-wood, none of them high enough for timber. On the right hand of the valley the hills slope gently up, the ground is firm, the grass short like sheep pasture; the hills on the left are steeper and more craggy, the lower part of the valley had been cleared of wood, and sown with different sorts of grain, by the industry of the inhabitants of the village of that name—industry that had served them to very little purpose, as the encampment of this wild army destroyed in one night every vestige of culture they had bestowed upon it.

Shalaka Woldo was not, to all appearance, a man to protect a stranger in the middle of a retreating army, disbanded as this was, and returning to very distant countries, perhaps never to be assembled

assembled again ; yet this man was chosen by one that perfectly knew he was above all others capable of the trust he had reposed in him ; he was about 55 years of age, was by birth an Agow, who had served Fasil's father from his infancy, when Kasmati Eshté succeeded to the government of Damot, upon old Fasil's death * ; he had been his servant likewise, as had young Fasil, so they were both at one time fellow-domestics of Kasmati Eshté.

When Fasil had slain this nobleman, and succeeded to his father's government of Damot, Shalaka Woldo was taken into his service as an old servant of his father ; it seemed his merit had not entitled him to further advancement ; he had no covering on his head, except long, bushy, black hair, which just began to be mingled with grey, but no beard, the defect of all his countrymen. He had a cotton cloth thrown about his shoulders in many different forms, occasionally as his fancy suggested to him ; but, unless at night, laid it generally upon one of the mules, and walked himself, his body naked, his shoulders only covered with a goat's skin in form of what the women call a tippet ; he had also a pair of coarse cotton trousers that reached to the middle of his thigh, and these were fastened at the waistband by a coarse cotton sash, or girdle, which went six or seven

* The person here called old Fasil, is Kasmati Waragna, in the time of Yalou II.

times about his waist, and in which he stuck a crooked knife, the blade about ten inches long, and three inches where broadest, which was the only weapon he wore, and served him to cut his meat, rather than for any weapon of offence or defence; for a man of consequence, as he was, could not suppose a possibility of danger while he was in the territory of his master. Sometimes he had a long pipe in his hand, being a great smoker; at other times, a stick of about three feet long, something thicker than one's thumb, with which he dealt about him very liberally, either to man, woman, or beast, upon the slightest provocation; he was bare-legged and footed, and without any mule, but kept up with us easily at whatever pace we went. With all this he was exceedingly sagacious and cunning, and seemed to penetrate the meaning of our discourse, though spoke in a language of which he did not understand a syllable.

As for Shalaka Welled Amlac, he was a man whom I shall hereafter mention as having been recommended to me by Ayto Aylo soon after my coming to Gondar. I did not, however, choose to let Fasil know of this connection, for fear he might lead him to some gainful imposition for his own account in the course of my journey through Maitsha.

At a quarter past two o'clock of the 31st of October we halted for a little on the banks of the river Chergué, a small and not very rapid stream, which coming from the south-west, runs N. E. and
loses

loses itself in the lake Tzana. At three o'clock in the afternoon we passed the small river of Dingleber, and in a quarter of an hour after came to a village of that name situated upon the top of a rock, which we ascended; here the road comes close to the end of the lake, and between it and the rock is a very narrow pass through which all provisions from the Agows and Maitsha must go; when, therefore, there is any disturbance in the south part of the kingdom, this pass is always occupied to reduce Gondar to famine.

The village itself belongs to the office of Betwudet, and, since that office has been discontinued, it makes part of the revenue of the Ras; the language here is Falasha, though only used now by the Jews who go by that name: it was anciently the language of all the province of Dembea, which has here its southern boundary. The air of Dingleber is excellent, and the prospect one of the most beautiful in Abyssinia; on the one side you have a distinct view of the lake Tzana and all its islands; on the north, the peninsula of Gorgora, the former residence of the Jesuits, where too are the ruins of the king's palace. On the north of the lake you have a distant prospect of Dara, and of the Nile crossing that lake, preserving distinctly the tract of its stream unmixed with the rest of the water, and issuing out to form what is called the second cataract at Alata, all places fixed in our mind by the memory of former distresses. On the south-east, we have a distant view of the flat country

try of Maitsha, for the most part covered with thick trees, and black like a forest; farther on the territory of Sacala, one of the districts of the Agows, near which are the fountains of the Nile, the object of all my wishes; and close behind this, the high mountains of Amid Amid, which surrounded them in two semicircles like a new moon, or amphitheatre, and seem by their shape to deserve the name of mountains of the moon, such as was given by antiquity to mountains, in the neighbourhood of which the Nile was supposed to rise.

At Dingleber I overtook my servants, who were disposed to stop there for that night. They had been very much oppressed by troops of wild Galla, who never having seen white men, could not refrain indulging a troublesome curiosity, without indeed doing any harm, or shewing any signs of insolence; this, however, did not hinder my servants from being terrified, as neither I nor any protector was near them. I resolved to avoid the like inconvenience, by proceeding further, as I knew the next day the main body of these savages would be up with us at Dingleber, and I rather wished to be at the point where our two roads separated, than pass a whole day in such company. It is true, I was under no sort of apprehension, for I perceived Fasil's horse driven before us commanded all necessary respect, and Zor Woldo had no occasion to exert himself at all.

At four o'clock in the afternoon we left Dingleber, and at seven passed a great river; at eight in
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the evening we crossed two inconsiderable streams, and came to a collection of small villages, called Degwassa : here we entered into some narrow defiles between mountains, covered to the very top with herbage, and brushwood ; it was a delightful night, and we were resolved to make the most of it. On every side of us we heard Guinea fowls, of which the woods here are full. At half past nine we halted a little, just leaving the narrow passes, and entering upon the plain. The district is called Sankraber. I found myself exceedingly fatigued, and slept a good half hour upon the ground.

At half past ten we began our journey anew, passing immediately the small village of Wainadega, famous for the decisive battle fought between king Claudius and the Moor Gragnè, where the latter was slain, and an end, for a time, put to the most disastrous war that ever Abyssinia was engaged in. At half after eleven we passed Guanguera on our left hand ; it is a collection of many villages, at about ten miles distance ; and at mid-night we had Degwassa on our right, and Guangera on our left. At half past twelve we again rested at the side of a small river, of which I know not the name : we were now in the flat country of Maitsha, descending very gently southward. At three quarters past one in the morning of the first of November I alighted at two small villages, whose huts were but just finished, about 500 yards from the two trees that were in the front of our army, when, after
passing

passing the Nile at that dangerous ford near the Jemma, we offered Fasil battle at Limjour, which was the place we were now again come to, but in better health and spirits than before.

Shalaka Woldo, upon my observing to him that I was happy to see the people again raising their houses which Michael had destroyed, said, with a barbarous kind of smile, "Aye, and so am I too; for if those two villages had not been built, we should have had no fire-wood at Kelti to-night;" by which he meant, that the Galla, who were behind him, and whose next station was the banks of the river Kelti, would pull down all the new-built houses, in order to carry fire-wood along with them; and indeed we saw traces of some houses which had been newly built, and still as newly destroyed, the wood of which, partly kindled, and partly lying on the ground, served us for our fire that night at Kelti. I found myself exceedingly indisposed, and could scarcely force on a couple of hours further, when we came to the banks of the river Kelti, at a quarter after six in the morning.

The Kelti here is a large river: at the ford it was four feet deep, though now the dry season: it is here called the Kelti Branti, because some miles higher up it is joined by a considerable river called the Branti, which rises to the westward in the high lands of the Agow's Quaquera, and both these streams, when united, fall into the Nile a little below. The banks of this river are exceed-

ingly steep and dangerous, the earth loose, falling in great lumps down into the stream ; it is a red bole of a soapy quality ; the bottom, too, and the ascent on the other side are soft ; the water, tho' troubled and muddy, is sweet and well-tasted. We saw lights and fires on the opposite bank, and had begun to unloose the tent, when we received a message by two Galla on foot, armed with lances and shields, that we should not encamp there, as our horses and mules would probably be stolen, but desiring us to pass the river forthwith, and pitch our tent among them.

I asked Shalaka Woldo who these were ? He said, they were an advanced post of Welleta Yafous, who had taken up that ground for the headquarters to-morrow ; that they were all Galla, under a famous partisan, a robber, called the *Jumper* ; and, by the bye, he added, speaking softly in my ear, that there was not a greater thief or murderer in all the country of the Galla. I paid him my compliments upon the judicious choice he had made of a companion and a protector for us : to which he answered, laughing, The better, the better ; you shall see how it is the better. As it was necessary to load the mules again, the tent and baggage having been taken off before we could pass the river, we all set to work with very ill will, being excessively fatigued with a long journey and want of sleep. No sooner had Shalaka Woldo perceived this, than by two whistles upon his fingers, and a yell, he brought
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above fifty people to our assistance; the baggage was passed in one moment, and in another my two tents were pitched; which is a work these people are very dexterous at, and well acquainted with.

As soon as we had encamped, we found that the reason we were not left alone on the other side of the river was, that those of the Galla who returned pulled down all the villages for fire-wood, and plundered the houses, though they were Galla like themselves, and of Fasil's party; and these again, driven from their houses, robbed of all they had except their lance and shield, followed the stragglers, and wreaked their vengeance upon those whom they could surprise, or were not too numerous for them.

I was scarcely laid down to sleep, when a servant, and with him Zor Woldo, were sent to me from the Jumper: they brought us a bull of an enormous size, but not very fat; though we were all pretty keen in point of appetite, the stock of provision sent us seemed to defy our utmost endeavours, but we were sure of assistants enough; so the bull was immediately killed and skinned. In the mean time, I took a short, but very refreshing sleep, being resolved to resume my journey with the same diligence till we had got to the point where we might separate from the army, which is at a place called Roo, where a large market is kept by the Agows, in whose country it is, and resorted to by all the neighbouring inhabitants.

About ten o'clock I waited upon our commander in chief the Jumper ; he seemed very much embarrassed at the visit, was quite naked, having only a towel about his loins, and had been washing himself in the Kelti, to very little purpose as I thought, for he was then rubbing his arms and body over with melted tallow ; his hair had been abundantly anointed before, and a man was then finishing his head-dress by plaiting it with some of the long and small guts of an ox, which I did not perceive had ever been cleaned ; and he had already put about his neck two rounds of the same, in the manner of a necklace, or rather a solitaire, one end of them hanging down to the pit of his stomach. Our conversation was neither long nor interesting ; I was overcome with the disagreeable smell of blood and carrion : he did not understand one word of Amharic, Geez, or any other language but Galla ; he asked no questions, and shewed no sort of curiosity. Woldo, on the other hand, informed himself from him of every thing he wanted to know.

This Jumper was tall and lean, very sharp faced, with a long nose, small eyes and prodigious large ears ; he never looked you in the face, but was rolling his eyes constantly round and round, and never fixing them upon any thing ; he resembled very much a lean keen greyhound ; there was no sternness nor command in his countenance, but a certain look that seemed to express a vacancy of mind, like that of an idiot. With this he was allowed

lowed on all hands to be the most cruel, merciless murderer and spoiler of all the Galla. He was very active on horseback, and very indifferent about food or sleep. I made him a small present, which he took with great indifference; only told Woldo, that if I meant it to pay for the bull he had sent me, it was needless, for it was given me by Fasil's order, and cost him nothing.

There we learned, that on our way we should meet a party of about 200 men, who had been sent by Fasil to take possession of a post before we came to Roo, lest, having intelligence of us, some of the Maitsha people, whose houses had been destroyed, might follow us when we were parted from the army. The Jumper told us that his brother had the command of that party, that they were all Galla of Fasil's own nation, under his brother, who was called the Lamb, and who was just such a murderer and robber as himself. I was just rising to go out of his tent when Zor Woldo, who was sitting behind me, informed me, there were news from Gondar. I asked him how he knew that? He said, he heard the people say so from without. A sudden trepidation now seized me, as I was afraid of some new trick, or obstacle, which might impede the journey, the accomplishment of which I so much longed for.

Upon going towards my tent I was met by Strates, and another Greek, with a servant of Ozoro Esther, with whom I was well acquainted; they had left Fasil at Bamba, whose wild Galla
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were not yet all dismissed, and he himself seemed not determined whether he should go to Gondar or not. They told me that all was in confusion at Gondar; that Gushe of Amhara, and Powussen of Begemder, had been there, and brought some trifle of money, for a mere pretence, to that wretch Socinios, whom the Iteghé unadvisedly had consented to make king; having called Fasil, Gushe, and Powussen together to reconcile them, that, united, they might attack Michael. The queen herself had been reconciled to Socinios, who led the life of a drunkard, a ruffian, and a profligate, but her chief fears were that Michael should return, the probability of which increased daily.

As for Fasil, he had hitherto answered the queen's invitation to Gondar evasively, sometimes by complaining that Gushe and Powussen had come to Gondar before him, and that Gushe was made Ras; at other times sending peremptorily to them to leave Gondar, and return to their provinces, or he would burn the town about their ears: and the last message, the day before they left the capital was, that he was then on his march towards Gondar, and consented to Gushe and Powussen's staying; but as these two chiefs had great reason to suspect that he was in correspondence with the king and Ras Michael in Tigré, as it was known to them that he had fomented disturbances both in Begemder and Amhara, they had gone with Socinios to Koscam, without drums beating, or any sort of parade whatever, and, after taking

taking leave, had the next day set out to their respective provinces. Upon another message from Fasil, they had agreed to return to Gondar, and leave their army at Emfras; but their troops, finding themselves so near, had disbanded, and returned to their homes, leaving Gusho and Powussen attended only by their household servants, who, finding themselves in danger, and that Fasil was actually advancing secretly, left Gondar and separated.

Ozoro Esther's servant (Guebra Mariam) likewise told me, that Michael, as he believed, waited for nothing but some arrangement with Fasil, for that he had no enemy remaining on the east of the Tacazzé; that his intention was to return by the way of Lasta, not willing to risk the many difficult passages in Woggora, a country full of hardy troops, inveterate enemies to the Ras, and where Ayto Tesfos of Samen had occupied all the defiles, and was resolved to dispute every post with him; it was well known, however, that the passes thro' the mountain of Lasta, were more dangerous and difficult than those of Woggora and Lamalmon; in a word, Guigarr, chief of the clan of Lasta (called Waag) possessed a strong hold in those mountains, where many an Abyssinian army had perished, and where it was absolutely impossible to proceed but with the consent and connivance of that clan, or tribe; and though this Guigarr had been Michael's enemy ever since the war of Mariam Barea, peace was now concluded between them, the Ras hav-

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ing set Guigarr's brother at liberty, who had been some time a prisoner, and was taken in an incursion which the people of Waag had made into Tigré: excepting this pass in the mountains of Lasta, all the ground was even from thence to Tigré; the territory of Gouliou, indeed, through which the army was to march for four days, was very ill-provided with water; it was inhabited by Galla, whom Michael had suffered to settle there, to be as a barrier between Tigré, Lasta, and Begemder; but this clan was perfectly at his command, so all was easy and secure if Guigarr only remained faithful.

After giving time to Guebra Mariam to refresh himself, I took him alone into the tent to hear Ozoro Esther's message: she had been ailing after my leaving Gondar, had had a slow fever, which very much affected her nerves, and was now alarmed at a symptom which was but the effect of weakness, startling, or involuntary contraction of her legs and arms, or a kind of convulsion, which frequently awakened her out of her sleep. This she thought was a sure forerunner of death; and adjured me, by every claim of friendship that she had upon me, to return ere it would be too late. She, moreover, pledged herself that her nephew, Aylo of Gojam, should immediately carry me to the head of the Nile the moment she was recovered. Upon closer interrogation, I found that, being abandoned as it were entirely to Fasil's discretion, by the retreat of Gusho and Powussen her friends,

friends, and the absence of her husband Ras Michael, she dreaded falling into the hands of Fasil, who, she well knew, was acquainted how active she had been in instigating Michael to avenge the blood of her late husband Mariam Barea, by the effusion of that of every Galla unfortunate enough to fall into his hands. Besides, the part her mother the Iteghé had acted in settling that wretch Socinios upon the throne, gave her the very best-founded apprehensions that Michael's resentment would have no bounds; and he had declared so by frequent messages, (the last a very brutal one) that he would hang Socinios, and her mother the Iteghé, with their heads downmost, upon the same tree, before the king's house, the very day that he entered Gondar. It was well known, besides, to his wife Ozoro Esther, and to the whole kingdom, that his performance upon these occasions never fell short of his threatnings. From all this, and a great sensibility of mind, Ozoro Esther, worn out by her late sickness, and by want of sleep, exercise, and nourishment, had fallen into a very dangerous situation, and of a very difficult cure, even though the cause was perfectly known.

I shall not trouble the reader with what passed in my mind at this juncture. I do believe the pursuit I was then engaged in was the only one which I would not have instantly abandoned upon such a summons. Besides the sincere attachment I had myself to her, as one of the most lovely and amiable women in the world; she was the mother of
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my most intimate friend Ayto Confu, and the wife of Ras Michael, over whom she had every day more and more influence, and I had long suspected that the young king, my constant benefactor, had contracted a decided tenderness for her. To have returned, would have been nothing had the danger or trouble been much greater; but it was obviously impossible another opportunity should offer: the country was now on the point of being plunged into a degree of disorder greater than that which had occasioned the retreat of the king to Tigré. I therefore resolved to run the risk of continuing for a time under the imputation of the foulest and basest of all sins, that of ingratitude to my benefactors; and I am confident, had it been the will of heaven that I had died in that journey, the consideration of my lying with apparent reason under that imputation would have been one of the most bitter reflections of my last moments. Having, therefore, taken my resolution, I acquainted Guebra Mariam that an immediate return was absolutely impossible; but that I should endeavour, with the utmost of my power, to make a speedy one; in the mean time, I sent word to the Greek priest (who was a sort of physician) how he was to proceed in the interim during my absence.

We had now left Maitsha by crossing the river Kelti. I shall only add, to what I have already said, that it is a very fruitful country, but so flat that the water with difficulty runs off after the tropical rains, and this occasions its being for several

ral months unhealthy. Several tribes of Galla, from the south of the Nile, were settled here by Yafous the Great, and his son David, as a defence for the rich countries of the Agows, Damot, Gojam, and Dembea, against the desolations and inroads of the wild Galla their countrymen, from whom they had revolted; they consist of ninety-nine families; and it is a common saying among them, that the devil holds the hundredth part for his own family, as there is no where else to be found a family of men equal to any of the ninety-nine. It has been sometimes connected with Gojam, oftener with Damot and the Agows, who were at this time under the government of Fasil.

The houses of Maitsha are of a very singular construction: the first proprietor has a field, which he divides into three or four, as he pleases, (suppose four) by two hedges made of the thorny branches of the acacia-tree. In the corner, or intersection of the two hedges, he begins his low hut, and occupies as much of the angle as he pleases. Three other brothers, perhaps, occupy each of the three other angles; behind these their children place their house, and inclose the end of their father's by another, which they make generally shorter than the first, because broader. After they have raised as many houses as they please, they surround the whole with a thick and almost impenetrable abbatis, or thorny hedge, and all the family are under one roof, ready to assist each other on the first alarm; for they have nothing to do

do but every man to look out at his own door, and they are close in a body together, facing every point that danger can possibly come from. They are, however, speedily destroyed by a stronger enemy, as we easily found, for we had only to set the dry hedge, and the canes that grew round it, on fire, which communicated at once to the houses, chiefly consisting of dry straw. Such is their terror of the small-pox, which comes here seldom more frequently than once in fifteen or twenty years; that when one of these houses is tainted with the disease, their neighbours, who know it will infect the whole colony, surround it in the night, and set fire to it, which is consumed in a minute, whilst the unfortunate people belonging to it (who would endeavour to escape) are unmercifully thrust back with lances and forks into the flames by the hands of their own neighbours and relations, without an instance of one ever being suffered to survive. This to us will appear a barbarity scarcely credible: it would be quite otherwise if we saw the situation of the country under that dreadful visitation of the small-pox; the plague has nothing in it so terrible.

The river Kelti has excellent fish, though the Abyssinians care not for food of this kind; the better people eat some species in the time of Lent, but the generality of the common sort are deterred by passages of scripture, and distinctions in the Mosaic law, concerning such animals as are clean and unclean, ill understood; they are, besides, exceed-

exceedingly lazy, and know nothing of nets ; neither have they the ingenuity we see in other savages of making hooks or lines : in all the time I staid, I never saw one Abyssinian fisher engaged in the employment in any river or lake.

At Kelti begins the territory of Aroossi : it is in fact the southmost division of Maitsha, on the west side of the Nile : it is not inhabited, however, by Galla, but by Abyssinians, a kindred of the Agow. When therefore we passed the river Kelti, we entered into the territory of Aroossi, bounded on the north by that river, as it is on the south by the Affar, the Aroossi running through the midst of that district.

My anxiety to lose no time in this journey had determined me to set out this afternoon. I had for this purpose dispatched Ozoro Esther's servant, but when we began to strike our tents, we were told neither beast nor man was capable of going farther that day ; in a word, the forced march that we had made of 29 miles without rest, and with but little food, had quite jaded our mules ; our men, too, who carried the quadrant, declared, that, without a night's rest, they could proceed no farther ; we were then obliged to make a virtue of necessity, and to confess, that, since we could go no farther, we were in the most convenient halting place possible, having plenty of both food and water, and as to protection, we had every reason to be satisfied that we were masters of the country in which we were encamped.

ed. It was generally agreed therefore to relax that day. I set aside an hour to put these memoirs in order, and then joined our servants, who, on such occasions, are always our companions, and who had provided a small horn full of spirits, and a jar full of beer, or bouza, by offering some trifling present to our commandant *the Jumper*, who was much more tenacious of his drink than his meat: we swam and dabbled with great delight in the Kelti, where are neither crocodiles nor gomari; slept a little afterwards, and retired into the tent to a supper, which would have been a cheerful one could I have forgot that Ozoro Esther was suffering.

We now began to discuss the motive that had induced our friend Strates again to tempt the danger of the ways. This singular fellow, as we learned from Guebra Mariam, as well as from his own confession, repented of his resolution as soon as we were gone, and had determined on foot to follow us, when he heard of this opportunity of Ozoro Esther's servant being sent on a message, and that princess was so well pleased with his anxiety that she gave him a mule that he might not retard her servant.

This Greek had known Fasil intimately, both when he was a private man in Kasmati Eshté's time, and afterwards, when he was governor of Damot, for he was a servant in the palace when Joas was king, as all the Greeks were; had a company of fusileers, and one or two other small
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appointments, all of which were taken from him, and from most of the other Greeks, upon the death of the dwarf, who, I before mentioned, was shot on the side of Ras Michael by an unknown hand upon his first arrival at Gondar. He now lived upon the charity of the queen mother, and what he picked up by his buffoonery among the great men at court. We found that in Shalaka Woldo we had got a man of more understanding than our friend Strates, but much about his equal in mimicry and buffoonery.

C H A P. XL.

Continue our Journey—Fall in with a Party of Galla---Prove our Friends---Pass the Nile---Arrive at Goutto, and visit the first Cataract.

ON the second of November, at seven in the morning we pursued our journey in a direction southward, and passed the church of Boskon Abbo; ever memorable to us as being the station of Fasil in May, when he intended to cut us off after our passage of the Nile. This brought on a conversation with our guide Woldo, who had been present with Fasil at his camp behind this church, and afterwards when Michael offered him battle at Limjour, he was there attending his master. He said, that the army of Wellela Yafous was above 12,000 strong; that they were intending to attack the king at the ford, and had no doubt of doing it successfully, as they imagined the King and Ras Michael, with part of both horse and foot, would pass early, but the rest with difficulty and danger; it was at that instant Wellela Yafous was to fall upon those that remained with Kessa Yafous,

on the other side of the Nile, in that confusion in which they necessarily must be. Fasil then, with above 3000 horse, and a large body of foot, was ready to inclose both Ras Michael and the King, and to have taken them prisoners; nothing could fall out more exactly, as it was planned, than this did; the king's black horse, and the other horse of his household, had taken possession of the ford, till the King, the Ras, and the greatest part of the Tigré musqueteers, under Guebra Mascäl, had passed.

On the other hand, Keflä Yafous, who had the charge of the rear, and the passing the mules, tents, and baggage, finding so many stragglers constantly coming in, had determined to wait on that side till day-light: this was the moment that would have decided the fate of our army; all was fatigue and despondency; but Welleta Yafous having lingered with the army of execution, and in the mean time the priests having been examined, and the spies detected, the moment Keflä Yafous began his march to Delakus, the favourable instant was lost to Fasil, and all that followed was extremely dangerous to him; for, before Welleta Yafous arrived, Keflä Yafous had passed the Nile, and was strongly posted with his musquetry, so that Welleta Yafous durst not approach him, and this gave Keflä Yafous an opportunity of detaching the best or freshest of his troops to reinforce Michael, whom Fasil found already an overmatch for him at Limjour, when he was forced to retreat before

the king, who very willingly offered him battle: add to this, that Welleta Yafous was not acquainted how near this junction of Kefla Yafous with Ras Michael might be, nor where Fasil was, or whether or not he had been beaten. Woldo pretended to know nothing of the spy whom he had left hanging on the tree at the ford when Kefla Yafous marched; but he laid all the blame upon the priests, of whose information he was perfectly instructed.

At three quarters after ten in the morning we passed the small river Arooffi, which either gives its name to, or receives it from the district through which it passes: it falls into the Nile about four miles below; is a clear, small, brisk stream; its banks covered with verdure not to be described. At half an hour before noon we came to Roo; it is a level space, shaded round with trees in a small plain, where the neighbouring people of Goutto, Agow, and Maitsha hold a market for hides, honey, butter, and all kinds of cattle. Gold too is brought by the Agows from the neighbouring Shangalla; all the markets in Abyssinia are held in such places as this in the open fields, and under the shade of trees: every body, while he is there, is safe under the protection of the government where that market is kept, and no feuds or private animosities must be resented there; but they that have enemies must take care of themselves in coming and going, for then they are at their own risk.

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In the dry bed of a river, at the foot of a small wood before you ascend the market-place at Roo, we found the *Lamb*, our friend the *Jumper's* brother, concealed very much like a thief in a hole, where we might easily have passed him unnoticed; we gave him some tobacco, of which he was very fond, and a few trifles. We asked him what questions we pleased about the roads, which he answered plainly, shortly, and discreetly; he assured us no Maitsha people had passed, not even to the market, and this we found afterwards was strictly true; for such as had intelligence that he and his party were on that road, did not venture from home with their goods, so that the day before, which had been that of the market, no one chose to run the risk of attending it.

Woldo was very eloque in praise of this officer the *Lamb*; he said he had a great deal more humanity than his brother, and when he made an inroad into Gojam, or any part of Abyssinia, he never murdered any women, not even those that were with child; a contrary custom it seems prevailing among all the Galla. I congratulated him upon this great instance of his humanity, which he took very gravely, as if really intended; he told me that it was he that attacked Michael's horse at Limjour; and added, that, had it been any other, Ayto Welleta Michael's life would not have been spared when he was taken prisoner. That want of curiosity, inattention, and absolute indifference for new objects, which was remarkable in the

Jumper, was very plainly discernible in this chieftain likewise, and seems to be a characteristic of the nation.

I asked Woldo what became of those 44 Galla who had their eyes pulled out, after the battle of Fagitta, by Michael, on his return to Gondar. Not one of them, said he, ever came into his own country. It was reported the hyæna ate them upon the Angrab, where they were turned out to starve. I saved three of them, said I. Yes, answered he, and others might have been saved too : and then added, in a low voice, that hyænas eating them at the Angrab was a story contrived for the Galla ; but we that are Fasil's servants know they were made away with by his order in Maitsha and the Agow country, that none of them might be seen in their own provinces to terrify the rest of their clans by the mangled appearance they then bore ; for this was Ras Michael's intention in disfiguring them, and yet leaving them alive ; to prevent therefore the success of this scheme, Fasil put them to death in their way before they reached their own country. I confess I was struck at the finessè which completed Waragna Fasil's character in my mind. What, said I, kill his own people taken prisoners whilst fighting for him, merely because their enemies had cruelly deprived them of their sight ! indeed, Woldo, that is not credible. O ho, says he, but it is true ; your Galla are not like other men, they do not talk about what is cruel and what is not ; they do just what
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is for their own good, what is reasonable, and think no more of the matter. Ras Michael, says he, would make an excellent Galla; and do not you believe that he would do any cruel action which my master Fasil would not perpetrate on the same provocation, and to answer the same purpose?

It now occurred to me why the three Galla, whom I had maintained at Gondar, had constantly refused to return into their own country with the many safe opportunities which at times had presented to them, especially since the king's retreat to Tigré; neither had I observed any desire in Fasil's servants, who occasionally came to Gondar, of helping to restore these unfortunate men to their country, because they knew the fate that awaited them.

Although the *Lamb*, and the other Galla his soldiers, paid very little attention, as I have said, to us, it was remarkable to see the respect they shewed Fasil's horse; the greatest part of them, one by one, gave him handfuls of barley, and the *Lamb* himself had a long and serious conversation with him; Woldo told me it was all spent in regretting the horse's ill-fortune, and Fasil's cruelty, in having bestowed him upon a white man, who would not feed him, or ever let him return to Bizamo. Bizamo is a country of Galla south of the Nile, after it makes its southmost turn, and has surrounded the kingdom of Gojam. I was better pleased with this genuine mark of kindness

kindness to the horse, than all the proofs of humanity Woldo had attributed to his chieftain for not frequently putting to death pregnant women. When I remarked this, Bad men! bad men! all of them, says Woldo; but your Ras Michael will be among them one of these days, and pull all their eyes out again; and so much the better.

At Roo we left the direct road which leads to Buré, the residence of the governor of Damot, towards which place the route of the army was directed; so I took leave, as I hoped, for ever of my brethren the Galla, but still continued to drive the horse before me. We turned our face now directly upon the fountains of the Nile, which lay S. E. by S. according to the compass. At a quarter before noon we saw the high sharp-pointed mountain of Temhua, standing single in the form of a cone, at about 18 miles distance, and behind this the mountain of Banja, the place where Fasil almost exterminated the Agows in a battle soon after his return to Buré, and to revenge which the king's last fatal campaign was undertaken in Maitsha, terminated by his retreat to Tigrè.

Here Strates, whilst amusing himself in the wood in search of new birds and beasts for our collection of natural history, fired his gun at one of the former, distinguished by the beauty and variety of its plumage. I stooped to make a rough sketch of it, which might be finished at more leisure: this was scarcely done, and we again moving
forwards

forwards on our journey, when we heard a confusion of shrill, barbarous cries, and presently saw a number of horsemen pouring down upon us, with their lances lifted up in a posture ready to attack us immediately. The ground was woody and uneven, so they could not make the speed they seemed to desire, and we had just time to put ourselves upon our defence with our firelocks, muskets, and blunderbusses in our hands, behind our baggage. Woldo ran several paces towards them, knowing them by the cry to be friends, even before he had seen them, which was, Fasil ali, Fasil ali—*there is none but Fasil that commands here.* Upon seeing us without any marks of discomposure, they all stopt with Woldo, and by him we learned that this was the party we had passed commanded by the *Lamb*, who, after we had left him, had heard that five Agow horsemen had passed between the army and his party, and from the shot he had feared they might have attempted something against us, and he had thereupon come to our assistance with all the speed possible.

Thus did we see that this man, who, according to our ideas, seemed in understanding inferior to most of the brute creation, had yet, in executing his orders, a discernment, punctuality, activity, and sense of duty, equal to any Christian officer who should have had a like commission; he now appeared to us in a quite different light than when we first had met him; and his inattention,

tion, when we were with him, was the more agreeable, as it left us at our entire liberty, without teasing or molesting us, when he could be of no real service, as every Amharic soldier would have done. On the other hand, his alacrity and resolution, in the moment he thought us in danger, exhibited him to our view as having on both occasions just the qualities we could have desired. We now, therefore, shewed him the utmost civility, spread a table-cloth on the ground by the brook, mixed our honey and liquid butter together in a plate, and laid plenty of teff bread beside it. We invited the Lamb to sit down and breakfast with us, which he did, each of us dipping our hand with pieces of bread alternately into the dish which contained the honey; but Strates, whose heart was open, for he felt very gratefully the Lamb's attention to save him from being murdered by the Agows, pulled out a large piece of raw beef, part of the bullock we killed at Kelti, which he had perfectly cleared from all incumbrance of bones, this he gave to the Lamb, desiring him to divide it among his men, which he did, keeping a very small proportion to himself, and which he ate before us. Drink we had none, but the water of the brook that ran by, for my people had finished all our other liquors at Kelti after I was in bed, when they were taking their leave of Guebra Mariam, Ozoro Esther's servant.

It was now time to pursue our journey; and, to shew our gratitude for the real service this Lamb
intended

intended to have rendered us, I gave him four times the quantity of tobacco he had got before, and so in proportion of every other trifle; all these he took with absolute indifference as formerly, much as if it had been all his own; he expressed no sort of thanks either in his words or in his countenance; only while at breakfast said, that he was very much grieved that it had been but a false alarm, for he heartily desired that some robbers really had attacked us, that he might have shewn us how quickly and dexterously he would have cut them to pieces though there had been a hundred of them. I mentioned to Woldo my obligations to the Lamb for his good wishes, but that things were quite as well as they were; that I had no sort of curiosity for such exhibitions, which I did not however doubt he would have performed most dexterously.

We were now taking leave to proceed on our journey, and my servant folding up the table-cloth, when the Lamb desired to speak to Woldo, and for the first time ventured to make a request, which was a very extraordinary one; he begged that I would give him the table cloth to cover his head, and keep his face from the sun. I could not help laughing within myself at the idea of preserving that beautiful complexion from sun-burning; but I gave him the cloth very readily, which he accordingly spread upon his head, till it covered half his face; he then got upon his horse and rode quietly away. Before he went, he detached fifteen
men,

men, Woldo said he did not know where, but by what he had gathered, and the route they had taken, he was sure that detachment was meant for our service, and to protect us on the right of our route, not having yet sufficiently quieted his own mind about the five Agows that passed between the army and his post the night we were at Kelti; these, however, being poorly mounted and armed, would not have found their account in meddling with us, though we had no wishes to shew our dexterity in destroying them, as our friend the Lamb was so desirous of doing, and we after discovered they were not quite so despicable as they were represented, nor were they Agows. All this passed in much less time than it is told. We were on horseback again in little more than half an hour; our friends were, like us, willing to part, only I ordered Strates to suspend his firing for that day, lest it should procure us another interview, which we by no means courted.

We had halted by the side of a small river which falls into the Affar; and a little before one o'clock we came to the Affar itself. The Affar, as I have already said, is the southern boundary of Arooffi, as Kelti is the northern; and as Arooffi is the southern district of Maitsha on the west side of the Nile, it follows that the Affar is the southern boundary of Maitsha.

. On the other side of this river begins the province of Goutto, which, according to the ancient rules of government before Ras Michael destroyed

ed all distinctions, depended on the province of Damot ; whereas Maitsha belonged to the office of Betwudet since Fafil had appropriated both to himself by force, as well as the whole country of the Agows, which he had possessed by the same title ever since the battle of Banja : the inhabitants of Goutto are the ancient natives of that country ; they are not Galla as those of Maitsha, but much more civilized and better governed. The languages of the Agow and the Amharic are the two chiefly spoken in Goutto, though there are distant places towards the Jemma on the side of the Nile, where they speak that of the Falasha likewise. The people in Goutto are richer and better lodged than those of the neighbouring Maitsha ; their whole country is full of cattle of the largest size, exceedingly beautiful, and of all the different colours ; there are some places likewise where their honey is excellent, equal to any in the country of the Agows, but the greatest quantity of it is of low price and of little esteem, owing to the lupine flowers on which the bees feed, and of which a great quantity covers the whole face of the country ; this gives a bitterness to the greatest part of the honey, and occasions, as they believe, vertigo's, or dizzinesses, to those that eat it : the same would happen with the Agows, did they not take care to eradicate the lupines throughout their whole country.

All this little territory of Arooffi is by much the most pleasant that we had seen in Abyssinia, perhaps it is equal to any thing the east can produce ; the whole

whole is finely shaded with acacia-trees, I mean the acacia vera, or the Egyptian thorn, the tree which, in the sultry parts of Africa, produces the gum-arabic. These trees grow seldom above fifteen or sixteen feet high, then flatten and spread wide at the top, and touch each other, while the trunks are far asunder, and under a vertical sun, leave you, many miles together, a free space to walk in a cool, delicious shade. There is scarce any tree but this in Maitsha; all Guanguera and Wainadega are full of them; but in these last-mentioned places, near the capital, where the country grows narrower, being confined between the lake and the mountains, these trees are more in the way of the march of armies, and are thinner, as being constantly cut down for fuel, and never replanted, or suffered to replace themselves, which they otherwise would do, and cover the whole face of the country, as once apparently they did. The ground below those trees, all throughout Arooffi, is thick covered with lupines, almost to the exclusion of every other flower; wild oats also grow up here spontaneously to a prodigious height and size, capable often of concealing both the horse and his rider, and some of the stalks being little less than an inch in circumference. They have, when ripe, the appearance of small canes. The inhabitants make no sort of use of this grain in any period of its growth: the uppermost thin husk of it is beautifully variegated with a changeable purple colour; the taste is perfectly good. I often
made

made the meal into cakes in remembrance of Scotland.

The Abyssinians never could relish these cakes, which they said were bitter, and burnt their stomachs, as also made them thirsty. I do, however, believe this is the oat in its original state, and that it is degenerated every where with us. The soil of this country is a fine black mould, in appearance like to that which composes our gardens. The oat seems to delight in a moist, watery soil; and, as no underwood grows under the shadow of the trees, the plough passes without interruption. As there is likewise no iron in their plough, (for it is all composed of wood) the furrow is a very slight one, nor does the plough reach deep enough to be entangled with the roots of trees; but it is the north part of Maitsha, however, that is chiefly in culture; south of the Kelti all is pasture; a large number of horses is bred here yearly, for it is the custom among the Galla to be all horsemen or graziers.

All Arooffi is finely watered with small streams, though the Affar is the largest river we had seen except the Nile; it was about 170 yards broad and two feet deep, running over a bed of large stones; though generally through a flat and level country, it is very rapid, and after much rain scarcely passable, owing to the height of its source in the mountains of the Agows; its course, where we forded it, is from south to north, but it soon turns to the north-east, and, after flowing

five

five or six miles, joins the Nile and loses itself in that river.

Immediately below this ford of the Affar is a magnificent cascade, or cataract. I computed the perpendicular height of the fall to be above 20 feet, and the breadth of the stream to be something more than 80; but it is so closely covered with trees or bushes, and the ground so uneven, that it needs great perseverance and attention to approach it near with safety; the stream covers the rock without leaving any part of it visible, and the whole river falls uninterrupted down with an incredible violence and noise, without being any way broken or divided; below this cataract it becomes considerably narrower, and, as we have said, in this state runs on to join the Nile.

The strength of vegetation which the moisture of this river produces, supported by the action of a very warm sun, is such as one might naturally expect from theory, though we cannot help being surprised at the effects when we see them before us, trees and shrubs covered with flowers of every colour, all new and extraordinary in their shapes, crowded with birds of many uncouth forms, all of them richly adorned with variety of plumage, and seeming to fix their residence upon the banks of this river, without a desire of wandering to any distance in the neighbouring fields: But as there is nothing, though ever so beautiful, that has not some defect or imperfection, among all these feathered beauties there is not one songster; and,

and, unless of the rose, or jessamin kind, none of their flowers have any smell ; we hear indeed many squalling noisy birds of the jay kind, and we find two varieties of wild roses, white and yellow, to which I may add jessamin (called Leham) which becomes a large tree ; but all the rest of the birds or flowers may be considered as liable to the general observation, that the flowers are destitute of odour, and the birds of song.

After passing the Affar, and several villages belonging to Goutto, our course being S. E. we had, for the first time, a distinct view of the high mountain of Geesh, the long-wished-for end of our dangerous and troublesome journey. Under this mountain are the fountains of the Nile ; it bore from us S. E. by S. about thirty miles, as near as we could conjecture, in a straight line, without counting the deviations or crookedness of the road.

Ever since we had passed the Affar we had been descending gently through very uneven ground, covered thick with trees, and torn up by the gullies and courses of torrents. At two o'clock in the afternoon of the second of November we came to the banks of the Nile ; the passage is very difficult and dangerous, the bottom being full of holes made by considerable springs, light sinking sand, and, at every little distance, large rocky stones ; the eastern side was muddy and full of pits, the ground of clay : the Nile here is about 260 feet broad, and very rapid ; its depth about four feet
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in the middle of the river, and the sides not above two. Its banks are of a very gentle, easy descent; the western side is chiefly ornamented with high trees of the *salix*, or willow tribe, growing straight, without joints or knots, and bearing long pointed pods full of a kind of cotton. This tree is called, in their language, Ha; the use they have for it is to make charcoal for the composition of gunpowder; but on the eastern side, the banks, to a considerable distance from the river, are covered with black, dark, and thick groves, with craggy-pointed rocks, and overshadowed with some old, tall, timber trees going to decay with age; a very rude and awful face of nature, a cover from which our fancy suggested a lion should issue, or some animal or monster yet more savage and ferocious.

The veneration still paid in this country for the Nile, such as obtained in antiquity, extends to the territory of Goutto, and I believe very little farther; the reason is, I apprehend, that to this, and no lower, the country has remained under its ancient inhabitants. Below, we know Maitsha has been occupied within these few ages by Pagan Galla, transplanted here for political purposes; at Goutto, however, and in the provinces of the Agows, the genuine indigenæ have not emigrated, and with these the old superstition is more firmly rooted in their hearts than is the more recent doctrine of Christianity; they crowded to us at the ford, and they were, after some struggle, of great use

use in assisting us to pass, but protested immediately with great vehemence against any man's riding across the stream, mounted either upon horse or mule: they, without any sort of ceremony, unloaded our mules, and laid our baggage upon the grass, insisting that we should take off our shoes, and making an appearance of stoning those who attempted to wash the dirt off their cloaks and trowsers in the stream. My servants were by this provoked to return rudeness for rudeness, and Woldo gave them two or three significant threats, while I sat by exceedingly happy at having so unexpectedly found the remnants of veneration for that ancient deity still subsisting in such full vigour. They after this allowed us, as well as our horses and mules, to drink, and conducted me across the river, holding me on each side very attentively for fear of the holes; but the want of shoes was very inconvenient, the pointed rocks and stones at the bottom giving me several deep cuts on the soles of my feet; after this the beasts were led all to the same side with myself, also one servant was passed with the greatest care by these poor people. Woldo had tipped me the wink to cross as they desired me: except my single gun, all the fire-arms and servants remained with the baggage and Woldo; and now we soon saw what was his intention, and how well he understood that the country he was in belonged to Fasil his master.

There were between twenty and thirty of the Agows, old and young, some of them armed with

lances and shields, and all of them with knives. Woldo took his small stick in one hand, sat down upon a green hillock by the ford with his lighted pipe in the other; he ranged my people behind him, leaving the baggage by itself, and began gravely to exhort the Agows to lose no time in carrying over our baggage upon their shoulders. This proposal was treated with a kind of ridicule by the foremost of the Agows, and they began plainly to insinuate that he should first settle with them a price for their trouble. He continued, however, smoking his pipe in seeming leisure, and much at his ease; and, putting on an air of great wisdom, in a tone of moderation he appealed to them whether they had not of their own accord insisted on our crossing the river on foot, had unloaded our baggage, and sent the mules to the other side without our consent. The poor people candidly declared that they had done so, because none are permitted in any other manner to cross the Nile, but that they would likewise carry our baggage safely and willingly over for pay; this word was no sooner uttered, when, apparently in a most violent passion, he leapt up, laid by his pipe, took his stick, and ran into the midst of them, crying out with violent execrations, And who am I? and who am I then? a girl, a woman, or a Pagan dog like yourselves? and who is Waragna Fasil; are you not his slaves? or to whom else do you belong, that you are to make me pay for the consequences of your devilish idolatries and superstitions?

but you want payment, do ye? here is your payment: he then tuckt his clothes tight about his girdle, began leaping two or three feet high, and laying about him with his stick over their heads, and faces, or wherever he could strike them.

After this Woldo wrested a lance from a long, awkward fellow that was next him, standing amazed, and levelled the point at him in a manner that I thought to see the poor peasant fall dead in an instant: the fellow fled in a trice, so did they all to a man; and no wonder, for in my life I never saw any one play the furious devil so naturally. Upon the man's running off, he cried out to my people to give him a gun, which made these poor wretches run faster and hide themselves among the bushes: lucky, indeed, was it for Woldo that my servants did not put him to the trial, by giving him the gun as he demanded, for he would not have ventured to fire it, perhaps to have touched it, if it had been to have made him master of the province.

I, who sat a spectator on the other side, thought we were now in a fine scrape, the evening coming on at a time of the year when it is not light at six, my baggage and servants on one side of the river, myself and beasts on the other, crippled absolutely in the feet by the stones, and the river so full of pits and holes, that, had they been all laden on the other side and ready, no one could have been bold enough to lead a beast through without a guide: the difficulty was not imaginary,

I had myself an instant before made proof of it, and all difficulties are relative, greater or less, as you have means in your hands to overcome them. I was clearly satisfied that Woldo knew the country, and was provided with a remedy for all this ; I conceived that this pacific behaviour, while they were unloading the mules, and driving them across the river, as well as his fury afterwards, was part of some scheme, with which I was resolved in no shape to interfere ; and nothing convinced me more of this than his resolute demand of a gun, when no persuasion could make him stay within ten yards of one if it was discharged, even though the muzzle was pointed in a contrary direction. I sat still, therefore, to see the end, and it was with some surprise that I observed him to take his pipe, stick, and my servants along with him, and cross the river to me as if nothing had happened, leaving the baggage on the other side, without any guard whatsoever ; he then desired us all to get on horseback, and drive the mules before us, which we did accordingly ; and I suppose we had not advanced above a hundred yards before we saw a greater number of people than formerly run down to where our baggage was lying, and, while one crossed the river to desire us to stay where we were, the rest brought the whole over in an instant.

This, however, did not satisfy our guide ; he put on a sulky air, as if he had been grievously injured ; he kept the mules where they were, and would not send one back to be loaded at the river-

river-side, alledging it was unlucky to turn back upon a journey; he made them again take the baggage on their shoulders, and carry it to the very place where our mules had halted, and there lay it down. On this they all flocked about him, begging that he would not report them to his master, as fearing some fine, or heavy chastisement, would fall upon their villages. The guide looked very sulky, said but very little, and that all in praise of himself, of his known mildness and moderation; as an instance of which he appealed (impudently enough) to his late behaviour towards them. If such a one, says he, naming a man that they knew, had been in my place, what a fine reckoning he would have made with you; why, your punishment would not have ended in seven years. They all acknowledged the truth of his observation, as well as his moderation, gave him great commendations, and, I believe, some promises when he passed there on his return.

Here I thought our affair happily ended to the satisfaction of all parties. I mounted my horse, and Woldo went to a large silk bag, or purse, which I had given him full of tobacco, and he had his match and pipe in his hand, just as if he was going to fill it before he set out; he then unloosed the bag, felt it on the outside, putting first his three fingers, then his whole hand, pinching and squeezing it both within-side and without; at last he broke out in a violent transport of rage, crying that *his gold* was gone, and that they had robbed

robbed him of it. I had not till this spoke one word: I asked him what he meant by his gold. He said he had two ounces (value about 5*l.*) in his tobacco-purse, and that some person had laid hold of them when the baggage lay on the other side of the water; that the Agows had done it, and that they must pay him for it. The despair and anguish that he had counterfeited quickly appeared in true and genuine colours in the faces of all the poor Agows; for his part, he disdained to speak but in monosyllables—So, so, and very well, and no matter, you shall see—and shook his head. We now proceeded on our journey; but two of the eldest among the Agows followed him to our quarters at night, where they made their peace with Woldo, who, I doubt not, dealt with them according to his usual mildness, justice, and moderation; a specimen of which we have already seen.

I confess this complicated piece of roguery, so suddenly invented, and so successfully carried into execution, gave me, for the first time, serious reflections upon my own situation, as we were in fact entirely in this man's hand. Ayto Aylo's servant, indeed, continued with me, but he was now out of his knowledge and influence, and, from many hints he had given, very desirous of returning home: he seemed to have no great opinion of Woldo, and, indeed, had been in low spirits, and disgusted with our journey, since he had seen the reception I first met with from Fasil at Bamba; but

but I had use for him till we should arrive at the house of Shalaka Welled Amlac, which was in the middle of Maittha, and in the way in which we were to return. I had therefore been very kind to him, allowing him to ride upon one of my mules all the way. I had given him some presents likewise, and promised him more, so that he continued with me, though not very willingly, observing every thing, but saying little; however, to me it was plain that Woldo stood in awe of him, for fear probably of his master Fasil, for Aylo had over him a most absolute influence, and Guebra Ehud (Aylo's brother) had been present, when Aylo's servant set out with us from Bamba under charge of this Woldo.

To Woldo, too, I had been very attentive: I had anticipated what I saw were his wishes, by small presents and more considerable promises. I had told him plainly at Bamba, in presence of Fasil's Fit-Auraris and Ayto Welleta Michael, (Ras Michael's nephew) that I would reward him in their fight according to his behaviour; that I scarcely thanked him for his being barely faithful, for so he was accountable to his master, whose honour was pledged for my safety; but that I expected he would not attempt to impose upon me, nor suffer others to do so, nor terrify me unnecessarily upon the road, nor obstruct me in my pursuits, be sulky, or refuse to answer the inquiries that I made about the countries through which we were to pass. All this was promised, repromised, and repeatedly

repeatedly sworn to, and the Fit-Auraris had assured me that he knew certainly this man would please me, and that Fafil was upon honour when he had chosen him to attend me, although he had then use for him in other business; and it is not less true, that, during the whole of our journey hitherto, he had behaved perfectly to the letter of his promise, and I had omitted no opportunity to gratify him by several anticipations of mine.

I had upon me a large beautiful red-silk sash, which went six or seven times round, in which I carried my crooked knife and two pistols; he had often admired the beauty of it, inquired where it was made, and what it might have cost. I had answered often negligently and at random, and I had thought no more of it, as his inquiries had gone no further. The time which he had fixed upon was not yet come, and we shall presently see how very dexterously he prolonged it.

We arrived, with these delays, pretty late at Goutto, (the village so called) and took up our lodging in the house of a considerable person, who had abandoned it upon our approach, thinking us part of Fafil's army. Though this habitation was of use in protecting us from the poor, yet it hurt us by alarming, and so depriving us of the assistance of the opulent, such as the present owner, who, if he had known we were strangers from Gondar, would have willingly staid and entertained us, being a relation and friend of Shalaka Welled Amlac.

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As we heard distinctly the noise of the cataract, and had still a full hour and a half of light, while they were in search of a cow to kill, (the cattle having been all driven away or concealed) I determined to visit the water-fall, lest I should be thereby detained the next morning. As Fasil's horse was fresh, by not being rode, I mounted him instead of driving him before me, and took a servant of my own, and a man of the village whom Woldo procured for us, as I would not allow him to go himself. Being well armed, I thus set out, with the peasant on foot, for the cataract; and, after riding through a plain, hard country, in some parts very stony, and thick-covered with trees, in something more than half an hour's easy galloping all the way, my servant and I came straight to the cataract, conducted there by the noise of the fall, while our guide remained at a considerable distance behind, not being able to overtake us.

This, known by the name of the First Cataract of the Nile, did not by its appearance come up to the idea we had formed of it, being scarce sixteen feet in height, and about sixty yards over; but in many places the sheet of water is interrupted, and leaves dry intervals of rock. The sides are neither so woody nor verdant as those of the cataract of the Affar; and it is in every shape less magnificent, or deserving to be seen, than is the noble cataract at Alata before described, erroneously called the Second Cataract; for below this there is a water-fall, nearly west of the church of Boskon Abbo,

Abbo, not much above the place where we swam our horses over in May, and less than this first cataract of which I am speaking, and nearer the source; there is another still smaller before the Nile joins the river Gumetti, after falling from the plains of Sacala; and there are several still smaller between the fountains and the junction of the Nile with the river Davola; these last mentioned, however, are very insignificant, and appear only when the Nile is low: in the rainy season, when the river is full, they scarcely are distinguished by ruffling the water as it passes.

Having satisfied my curiosity at this cataract, I galloped back the same road that I had come, without having seen a single person since I left Goutto. Fasil's horse went very pleasantly, he did not like the spur, indeed, but he did not need it. On our arrival we found a cow upon the point of being killed; there was no appearance of any such to be found when I set out for the cataract, but the diligence and sagacity of Woldo had overcome that difficulty. By a particular manner of crying through his hands applied to his mouth, he had contrived to make some beasts answer him, who were hid in an unsuspected bye-place, one of which being detected was killed without mercy.

It was now, I thought, the proper time to give Woldo a lesson as to the manner in which I was resolved to behave among the Agows, who I knew had been reduced to absolute poverty by Fasil after the

the battle of Banja. I told him, that since the king had given me the small territory of Geesh, I was resolved to take up my abode there for some time; and also, to make my coming more agreeable, it was my intention for that year to discharge them of any taxes which they paid the king, or their superior Fasil, in whose places I then stood. "Stay, says Woldo, don't be in such a hurry, see first how they behave."—"No, said I, I will begin by teaching them how to behave; I will not wait till their present misery prompts them to receive ill (as they very naturally will do) a man who comes, as they may think, wantonly for curiosity only, to take from them and their starved families the little Fasil has left them: the question I ask you then is briefly this, Do you conceive yourself obliged to obey me, as to what I shall judge necessary to direct you to do, during my journey to Geesh and back again?" He answered, By all means, or he could never else return to his master Fasil. "This, then, said I, is the line of conduct I mean to pursue while I am among the Agows; you shall have money to buy every thing; you shall have money, or presents, or both, to pay those that serve us, or that shew us any kindness, and when we shall join your master Fasil (as I hope we shall do together) you shall tell him that I have received his majesty's rent of the Agows of Geesh, and I will enter a receipt for it in the king's destar, or revenue-book at Gondar, if we see him there, as I expect we shall, upon my return.

return. I moreover, undertake, that we shall gain more by this than by any other method we could have pursued." "There is one thing, however, says Woldo, you would not surely have me free them the dues paid by every village where a king's servant is employed to conduct strangers, as I am." "No, no, I do not go so near as that; we shall only buy what you would have otherwise taken by force for my use."

"Some years ago, says Woldo, when I was a young man, in king Yafous's time, a white man, called Negadé Ras Georgis, had both Geesh and Sacala given him by the king; he went there twice a year, and staid a month or more at a time; he was a great hunter and drinker, and a devil for the women; he not only spent what he got from the village, but all the money he brought from Gondar into the bargain; it was a jovial time, as I have heard; all was merriment: The first day he came there, some of the men of Sacala, out of sport, disputing with three of the Agows of Zee-gam, fell to it with their knives and lances, and four men were killed in an instant upon the spot; fine stout fellows, every one like a lion; good men all of them; there are no such days seen now, unless they come about when you are there, and then I shall have my share of every thing." "Woldo, said I, with all my heart; I shall be otherwise employed; but you shall be at perfect liberty to partake of every sport, always excepting the diversion of killing four men." But I had observed
this

this day, with some surprise, that he doubted several times whether we were on the way to the Nile or not; and I did not think this prospect of entertainment which I held out to him was received with such joy as I expected, or as if he meant to partake of it.

Strates had refused to go to the first cataract, having so violent an appetite that he could not abandon the cow; and, after my arrival, it was his turn to watch that night. When I was lain down to rest in a little hovel like a hog's sty, near where they were sitting, I heard a warm dispute among the servants, and, upon inquiry, found Strates was preparing steaks on a gridiron to make an entertainment for himself while the rest were sleeping; these, on the other hand, were resolved to play him a trick to punish his gluttony. When the steaks were spread upon the gridiron, Woldo had undertaken to pour some fine dust, or sand, through the hole in the roof, which served as a chimney; and this he had done with success as often as Strates went to any distance from the fire. Not content, however, with the position in which he then was, but desirous to do it more effectually, he attempted to change his place upon the roof where he stood, thinking it all equally strong to bear him; but in this he was mistaken; the part he was removing to suddenly gave way, and down he came upon the floor, bringing half the roof and part of the wall, together with a prodigious dust, into the fire.

The

The surprise and sight of his own danger made Woldo repeat some ejaculation to himself in Galla. My servants, who were waiting the success of the scheme, cried, The Galla! the Galla! and Strates, who thought the whole army of wild Galla had surrounded the house, fell upon his face, calling Maruni! Maruni!—Spare me! spare me!—I was in a profound sleep when roused by the noise of the roof, the falling of the man, and the cry of Galla! Galla! I started up, and laid hold of a musket loaded with flugs, a bayonet at the end of it, and ran to the door, when the first thing I saw was Woldo examining his hurts, or burns, but without any arms. A laugh from without made me directly suppose what it was, and I was presently fully satisfied by the figure Strates and Woldo made, covered with dirt and dust from the roof; but, while they were entertaining themselves with this foolish trick, the charch that had fallen upon the fire began to flame, and it was with the utmost difficulty we extinguished it, otherwise the whole village might have been burnt down.—I heard distinctly the noise of the cataract all this night.

CHAPTER XII.

**Leave Goutto---Mountains of the Moon---Rogery
of Woldo our Guide---Arrive at the Source of the
Nile.**

IT was the 3d of November, at eight o'clock in the morning, that we left the village of Gonne, and continued, for the first part of the day, thro' a plain country full of acacia-trees, and a few of other sorts; but they were all pollards, that is, stunted, by having their tops cut off when young, so that they bore now nothing but small twigs, or branches; these, too, seemed to have been topped yearly. As there appeared no doubt that this had been done purposely, and for use, I asked, and was informed, that we were now in the honey country, and that these twigs were for making large baskets, which they hung upon trees at the sides of their houses, like bird cages, for the bees to make their honey in them during the dry months; all the houses we passed afterwards, and the trees near them, were furnished with these baskets, having numerous hives of bees at work in

in them; the people themselves seemed not to heed them, but they were an excessive plague to us by their stings during the day, so that it was only when we were out in the fields, or at night in the house, that we were free from this inconvenience.

The high mountain of Berfa now bore south from us about ten miles distant; it resembles in shape, a gunner's wedge, and towers up to the very clouds amidst the lesser mountains of the Agow. Sacala is south south-east. The country of the Agows extends from Berfa on the south to the point of due west, in form of an amphitheatre, formed all round by mountains, of which that of Banja lies south south-west about nine miles off. The country of the Shangalla, beyond the Agows, lies west north-west. From this point all territory of Goutto is full of villages, in which the fathers, sons, and grandsons live together; each degree, indeed, in a separate house, but near or touching each other, as in Maitsha, so that every village consists of one family.

At three quarters past eight we crossed a small, but clear river, called Dee-ohha, or the river Dee. It is singular to observe the agreement of names of rivers in different parts of the world, that have never had communication together. The Dee is a river in the north of Scotland. The Dee runs through Cheshire in England; and Dee is a river here in Abyssinia. Kelti is the name of a river in Monteith; Kelti, too, we found in Maitsha. Arno is a well-known river in Tuscany; and we
found

found another Arno, below Emfras, falling into the lake Tzana. Not one of these rivers, as far as I could observe, resemble each other in any one circumstance, nor have they a meaning or signification in any one language I know.

The church of Abbo is a quarter of a mile to our right, and the church of Lion Mariam bears east by south half a mile. We resumed our journey at half past nine, and, after advancing a few minutes, we came in sight of the ever memorable field of Fagitta. At a quarter past ten we were pointing to the south-east, the two great clans of the Agow, Zeegam, and Dengui, being to the south-west; the remarkable mountain Davenanza is about eight miles off, bearing south-east by south, and the course of the Nile is east and west. Eastward still from this is the high mountain of Adama, one of the ridges of Amid Amid, which form the entrance of a narrow valley on the east side, as the mountains of Litchambara do on the west. In this valley runs the large river Jemma, rising in the mountains, which, after passing thro' part of Maitsha, falls below into the Nile. The mountains from this begin to rise high, whereas at Samseen they are very low and inconsiderable. Adama is about ten miles from our present situation, which is also famous for a battle fought by Fasil's father, while governor of Damot, against the people of Maitsha, in which they were totally defeated.

We now descended into a large plain full of marshes, bounded on the west by the Nile, and at ten and three quarters we crossed the small river Diwa, which comes from the east and runs to the westward : though not very broad, it was by much the deepest river we had passed ; the banks of earth being perpendicular and infirm, and the bottom foul and clayey, we were obliged to dismount ourselves, unload the mules, and carry our baggage over. This was a troublesome operation, though we succeeded at last. I often regretted to Woldo, that he could not here find some of the good people like the Agows at the ford of the Nile ; but he shook his head, saying, These are another sort of stuff ; we may be very thankful if they let us pass ourselves : in the flat country I do not wish to meet one man on this side the mountain Aformasha.

In this plain, the Nile winds more in the space of four miles than, I believe, any river in the world ; it makes above a hundred turns in that distance, one of which advances so abruptly into the plain that we concluded we must pass it, and were preparing accordingly, when we saw it make as sharp a turn to the right, and run far on in a contrary direction, as if we were never to have met it again : the Nile is not here above 20 feet broad, and is nowhere above a foot deep. The church of Yafous was above three quarters of a mile to the west.

At one o'clock we ascended a ridge of low hills which terminates this plain to the south. The mountains behind them are called Attata; they are covered thick with brush-wood, and are cut through with gullies and beds of torrents. At half past one we were continuing S. E. in a few minutes after we passed a clear but small stream, called Minch, which signifies the Fountain. At two o'clock we arrived at the top of the mountain of Attata, and from this discovered the river Abola coming from the S. S. E. and in a few minutes passed another small river called Giddili, which loses itself immediately in a turn, or elbow, which the river Abola makes here below. At half past two we descended the mountain of Attata, and immediately at the foot of it crossed a small river of the same name, which terminates the territory of Attata; here, to the south, it is indeed narrow, but very difficult to pass by reason of its muddy bottom. The sun all along the plain of Goutto had been very hot till now, and here so excessively, that it quite overcame us: what was worse, Woldo declared himself so ill, that he doubted if he could go any farther, but believed he should die at the next village. Though I knew too much of the matter to think him in any danger from real disease, I saw easily that he was infected with a counterfeit one, which I did not doubt was to give me as much trouble as a real one would have done.

At three o'clock, however, we pushed on towards the S. E. and began to enter into the plain of Abola, one of the divisions of the Agow. The plain or rather valley of Abola, is about half a mile broad for the most part, and nowhere exceeds a mile. The mountains that form it on the east and west side are at first of no considerable height, and are covered with herbage and acacia-trees to the very top; but as they run south, they increase in height, and become more rugged and woody. On the top of these are most delightful plains, full of excellent pasture; the mountains to the west are part of, or at least join the mountain of Aformasha, where, from a direction nearly S. E. they turn south, and inclose the villages and territory of Sacala, which lie at the foot of them, and still lower, that is more to the westward, the small village of Geesh, where are the long expected fountains of the Nile.

These mountains are here in the form of a crescent; the river runs in the plain along the foot of this ridge, and along the side of it Kasmati Fasil passed after his defeat at Fagitta. The mountains which form the east side of this plain run parallel to the former in their whole course, and are part of, or at least join the mountains of Litchambara, and these two, when behind Aformasha, turn to the south, and then to the S. W. taking the same form as they do, only making a greater curve, and inclosing them likewise in the form of a crescent, the extremity of which terminates immediately

ately above the small lake Gooderoo, in the plain of Afloa, below Geesh, and directly at the fountains of the Nile.

The river Abola comes out of the valley between these two ridges of mountains of Litchambara and Aformasha, but does not rise there; it has two branches, one of which hath its source in the western side of Litchambara, near the center of the curve where the mountains turn south; the other branch rises on the mountain of Aformasha, and the east side of our road as we ascended to the church of Mariam. Still behind these are the mountains of Amid Amid, another ridge which begin behind Samseen, in the S. W. part of the province of Maitsha, though they become high only from the mountain of Adama, but they are in shape exactly like the former ridges, embracing them in a large curve in the shape of a crescent.

Between Amid Amid and the ridge of Litchambara is the deep valley now known by the name of St. George; what was its ancient, or Pagan name, I could not learn. Through the middle of this valley runs the Jemma, a river equal to the Nile, if not larger, but infinitely more rapid: after leaving the valley, it crosses that part of Maitsha on the east of the Nile, and loses itself in that river below Samseen, near the ford where our army passed in the unfortunate retreat of the month of May: its sources or fountains are three; they rise in the mountains of Amid Amid, and keep on

close

close to the east side of them, till the river issues out of the valley into Maitsha.

This triple ridge of mountains disposed one range behind the other, nearly in form of three concentric circles, seem to suggest an idea that they are the mountains of the Moon, or the *Montes Luna* of antiquity, at the foot of which the Nile was said to rise; in fact, there are no others. Amid Amid may perhaps exceed half a mile in height, they certainly do not arrive at three quarters, and are greatly short of that fabulous height given them by Kircher. These mountains are all of them excellent soil, and every where covered with fine pasture; but as this unfortunate country had been for ages the theatre of war, the inhabitants have only ploughed and sown the top of them out of the reach of enemies or marching armies. On the middle of the mountain are villages built of a white sort of grass, which makes them conspicuous at a great distance; the bottom is all grass, where their cattle feed continually under their eye; these, upon any alarm, they drive up to the top of the mountains out of danger. The hail lies often upon the top of Amid Amid for hours, but snow was never seen in this country, nor have they a word * in their language for it. It is also remarkable, though we had often

* By this is meant the Amharic, for in Geez the word for snow is Tilze: this may have been invented for translating the scriptures.

violent hail at Gondar, and even when the sun was vertical, it never came but with the wind blowing directly from Amid Amid.

At ten minutes past three o'clock we crossed the small river Iworra, in the valley of Abola; it comes from the east, and runs westward into that river. At a quarter after four we halted at a house in the middle of the plain, or valley. This valley is not above a mile broad, the river being distant about a quarter, and runs at the foot of the mountains. This village, as indeed were all the others we had seen since our crossing the Nile at Goutto, was surrounded by large, thick plantations, of that singular plant the Ensete, one of the most beautiful productions of nature, as well as most agreeable and wholesome food of man. It is said to have been brought by the Galla from Narea, first to Maitsha, then to Goutto, the Agows, and Damot, which last is a province on the south side of the mountains of Amid Amid. This plant, and the root called Denitch, (the same which is known in Europe by the name of the Jerusalem artichoke, a root deserving more attention than is paid to it in our country,) supply all these provinces with food.

We were but seldom lucky enough to get the people of the villages to wait our arrival; the fears of the march of the Galla, and the uncertainty of their destination, made them believe always we were detachments of that army, to which the presence of Fahl's horse driven constantly before us
very

very much contributed : we found the village where we alighted totally abandoned, and in it only an earthen pot, with a large slice of the Enfete plant boiling in it ; it was about a foot in length, and ten inches broad, and was almost ready for eating : we had fortunately meat with us, and only wanting vegetables to complete our dinner. We appropriated to ourselves, without scruple, this enfete ; and, by way of reparation, I insisted upon leaving, at parting, a brick, or wedge of salt, which is used as small money in Gondar, and all over Abyssinia ; it might be in value about a shilling.

On the 4th of November, at eight o'clock we left our small village on the plain of Abola, without having seen any of the inhabitants ; however, we were sure there were among them some who were curious enough to wish to look at us, for, in walking late at night, I heard several voices speaking low among the enfete-trees and canes. It was not possible to collect what they said in the low tone in which they spoke ; and I should not probably have been much wiser, had they spoken louder, as their language was that of their country, the Agow, of which I did not understand one word ; however, I thought I could distinguish they were women, the men apprehending we were enemies having probably taken refuge in the mountains above. I did every thing possible to surround or surprise one or two of these people, that, by good usage and presents, we might reconcile them to us,
and

and get the better of their fear; but it was all to no purpose; they fled much quicker than we could pursue them, as they knew the country, and it was not safe to follow them far into the wilderness, lest we might stumble upon people who might misinterpret our intentions.

I was determined to try whether, by taking away that scare-crow, Fasil's horse, from before us, and riding him myself, things would change for the better: this I distinctly saw, that Woldo would have wished the horse to have gone rather without a rider, and this I had observed the night I went to the cataract from Goutto. Sitting on the king's saddle, or in his seat at Gondar, is high treason; and Woldo thought, at all times, but now especially, that his master was inferior to no king upon earth. I even attributed to that last expedition at Goutto his silence and apparent sickness ever since; but in this last circumstance I found afterwards that I was mistaken: be that as it would, my plan was very different from Woldo's as to the horse, he was become a favourite, and I was resolved, in the course of my journey, to improve his talents so, that he should make a better appearance on his return to Gondar, than he did when I received him from Fasil at Bamba. I compounded, as I conceived, with Woldo's scruples, by laying aside Fasil's saddle, which was a very uneasy one, besides, that it had iron rings instead of stirrups; in short, as this horse was very beautiful, (as many of the Galla horses are) and
all

all of one colour, which was of lead, without any spot of white, I hoped to make him an acceptable present to the King, who was passionately fond of horses. Here it may not be improper to observe, that all very great men in Abyssinia choose to ride horses of one colour only, which have no distinguishing mark whereby they may be traced in retreats, flights, or such unlucky expeditions: It is the king alone in battle who rides upon a horse distinguished by his marks, and that on purpose that he may be known.

There were many villages in this valley which seemed to have escaped the havock of war, nor had they that air of poverty and misery so apparent in all the other habitations we had seen. We were pointing nearly east south-east, when we passed the small river Googueri, which, like all the others on this side of the mountain, falls into the Abola. We then left the valley of Abola on our right, and began to travel along the sides of the mountains on the west. At three quarters after eight we passed a violent torrent called Karnachiuli, which falls from north-east into the Abola. At nine we again descended into the valley, and, a few minutes after, came to the banks of the Caccino, which flows from the north just above, and joins the Abola. Here we halted for a little to rest our men, and to adjust thoroughly the minutes of our journey, that the whole might appear in a distinct manner in the map that I intended to make on my return to Gondar.

At

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE. 269

At half past nine we again set out, and, a few minutes after, passed the river Abola, which gives its name to the valley into which we had descended, and receives many lesser streams, and is of considerable breadth. I could discover no traces of fish either in it or in any river since we left the Affar, from which circumstance I apprehend, that, in these torrents from the mountains, almost dry in summer, and which run with vast rapidity in winter, the spawn and fish are both destroyed in different seasons by different causes.

After coasting some little time along the side of the valley, we began to ascend a mountain on the right, from which falls almost perpendicularly a small, but very violent stream, one of the principal branches of the Abola, which empties itself into the Nile, together with the other branch, a still more considerable stream, coming from east south-east along the valley between Litchambara and Aformasha. At eleven o'clock our course was south by east, and we passed near a church, dedicated to the Virgin, on our left. The climate seemed here most agreeably mild, the country covered with the most lively verdure, the mountains with beautiful trees and shrubs, loaded with extraordinary fruits and flowers. I found my spirits very much raised with these pleasing scenes, as were those of all my servants, who were, by our conversation, made geographers enough to know we were near approaching to the end of our journey. Both Strates and I, out of the *Lamb's* hearing,

ing, had shot a variety of curious birds and beasts. All but Woldo seemed to have acquired new strength and vigour. He continued in his air of despondency, and seemed every day to grow more and more weak. At a quarter past eleven we arrived at the top of the mountain, where we, for the first time, came in sight of Sacala, which extends in the plain below from west to the point of south, and there joins with the village of Geesh.

Sacala, full of small low villages, which, however, had escaped the ravages of the late war, is the easternmost branch of the Agows, and famous for the best honey. The small river Kebezza, running from the east, serves as a boundary between Sacala and Aformasha; after joining two other rivers, the Gometti and the Googueri, which we presently came to, after a short course nearly from S. E. to N. W. it falls into the Nile a little above its junction with the Abola.

At three quarters past eleven we crossed the river Kebezza, and descended into the plain of Sacala; in a few minutes we also passed the Googueri, a more considerable stream than the former; it is about sixty feet broad, and perhaps eighteen inches deep, very clear and rapid, running over a rugged, uneven bottom of black rock. At a quarter past twelve we halted on a small eminence, where the market of Sacala is held every Saturday. Horned cattle, many of the greatest beauty possible, with which all this country abounds; large asses, the most useful of all beasts for riding or carriage;

carriage; honey, butter, ensete for food, and a manufacture of the leaf of that plant, painted with different colours like Mosaic work, are here exposed to sale in great plenty; the butter and honey, indeed, are chiefly carried to Gondar, or to Buré; but Damot, Maitsha, and Gojam likewise take a considerable quantity of all these commodities.

At a quarter after one o'clock we passed the river Gumetti, the boundary of the plain: we were now ascending a very steep and rugged mountain, the worst pass we had met on our whole journey. We had no other path but a road made by the sheep or the goats, which did not seem to have been frequented by men, for it was broken, full of holes, and in other places obstructed with large stones that seemed to have been there from the creation. It must be added to this, that the whole was covered with thick wood, which often occupied the very edge of the precipices on which we stood, and we were every where stopt and entangled by that execrable thorn the kantuffa, and several other thorns and brambles nearly as inconvenient. We ascended, however, with great alacrity, as we conceived we were surmounting the last difficulty after the many thousands we had already overcome. Just above this almost impenetrable wood, in a very romantic situation, stands St. Michael, in a hollow space like a nitch between two hills of the same height, and from which

which it is equally distant. This church has been unfrequented for many years; the excuse they make is, that they cannot procure frankincense, without which, it seems, their mass or service cannot be celebrated; but the truth is, they are still Pagans; and the church, having been built in memory of a victory over them above a hundred years ago, is not a favourite object before their eyes, but a memorial of their inferiority and misfortune. This church is called St. Michael Sacala to distinguish it from another more to the southward, called St. Michael Geesh.

At three quarters after one we arrived at the top of the mountain, whence we had a distinct view of all the remaining territory of Sacala, the mountain Geesh, and church of St. Michael Geesh, about a mile and a half distant from St. Michael Sacala, where we then were. We saw, immediately below us, the Nile itself, strangely diminished in size, and now only a brook that had scarcely water to turn a mill. I could not satiate myself with the sight, revolving in my mind all those classical prophecies that had given the Nile up to perpetual obscurity and concealment. The lines of the poet came immediately into my mind, and I enjoyed here, for the first time, the triumph which already, by the protection of Providence, and my own intrepidity, I had gained over all that were powerful, and all that

that were learned, since the remotest antiquity :—

*Arcanum natura caput non prodidit ulli,
Nec licuit populis parvum te, Nile, videre;
Amovitque sinus, et gentes maluit ortus
Mirari, quam nōsse tuos.——*

LUCAN.

I was awakened out of this delightful reverie by an alarm that we had lost Woldo our guide. Tho' I long had expected something from his behaviour, I did not think, for his own sake, it could be his intention to leave us. The servants could not agree when they last saw him: Strates and Aylo's servant were in the wood shooting, and we found by the gun that they were not far from us; I was therefore in hopes that Woldo, though not at all fond of fire-arms, might be in their company; but it was with great dissatisfaction I saw them appear without him. They said, that, about an hour before, they had seen some extraordinary large, rough apes, or monkeys, several of which were walking upright, and all without tails; that they had gone after them through the wood till they could scarce get out again; but they did not remember to have seen Woldo at parting. Various conjectures immediately followed; some thought he had resolved to betray and rob us; some conceived it was an instruction of Fasil's to him, in order to our being treacherously murdered; some
again

again supposed he was slain by the wild beasts, especially those apes or baboons, whose voracity, size, and fierce appearance were exceedingly magnified, especially by Strates, who had not the least doubt, if Woldo had met them, but that he would be so entirely devoured, that we might seek in vain without discovering even a fragment of him. For my part, I began to think that he had been really ill when he first complained, and that the sickness might have overcome him upon the road; and this, too, was the opinion of Ayto Aylo's servant, who said, however, with a significant look, that he could not be far off; we therefore sent him, and one of the men that drove the mules, back to seek after him; and they had not gone but a few hundred yards when they found him coming, but so decrepid, and so very ill, that he said he could go no farther than the church, where he was positively resolved to take up his abode that night. I felt his pulse, examined every part about him, and saw, I thought evidently, that nothing ailed him. Without losing my temper, however, I told him firmly, That I perceived he was an impostor; that he should consider that I was a physician, as he knew I cured his master's first friend, Welleta Yafous: that the feeling of his hand told me as plain as his tongue could have done, that nothing ailed him; that it told me likewise he had in his heart some prank to play, which would turn out very much to his disadvantage. He seemed dismayed after this, said
little,

little, and only desired us to halt for a few minutes, and he should be better; for, says he, it requires strength in us all to pass another great hill before we arrive at Geesh.

“Look you, said I, lying is to no purpose; I know where Geesh is as well as you do, and that we have no more mountains or bad places to pass through; therefore, if you choose to stay behind, you may; but to-morrow I shall inform Welleta Yafous at Buré of your behaviour.” I said this with the most determined air possible, and left them, walking as hard as I could down to the ford of the Nile. Woldo remained above with the servants, who were loading their mules; he seemed to be perfectly cured of his lameness, and was in close conversation with Ayto Aylo’s servant for about ten minutes, which I did not choose to interrupt, as I saw that man was already in possession of part of Woldo’s secret. This being over, they all came down to me, as I was sketching a branch of a yellow rose-tree, a number of which hang over the ford.

The whole company passed without disturbing me; and Woldo, seeming to walk as well as ever, ascended a gentle rising hill, near the top of which is St. Michael Geesh. The Nile here is not four yards over, and not above four inches deep where we crossed; it was indeed become a very trifling brook, but ran swiftly over a bottom of small stones, with hard, black rock appearing amidst them: it is at this place very easy to pass,

and very limpid, but, a little lower, full of inconsiderable falls; the ground rises gently from the river to the southward, full of small hills and eminences, which you ascend and descend almost imperceptibly. The whole company had halted on the north side of St. Michael's church, and there I reached them without affecting any hurry.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon, but the day had been very hot for some hours, and they were sitting in the shade of a grove of magnificent cedars, intermixed with some very large and beautiful cusso-trees, all in the flower; the men were lying on the grass, and the beasts fed, with the burthens on their backs, in most luxuriant herbage. I called for my herbary*, to lay the rose-branch I had in my hand smoothly, that it might dry without spoiling the shape; having only drawn its general form, the pistil and stamina, the finer parts of which (though very necessary in classing the plant) crumble and fall off, or take different forms in drying, and therefore should always be secured by drawing while green. I just said indifferently to Woldo in passing, that I was glad to see him recovered; that he would presently be well, and should fear nothing. He then got up, and desired to speak with me alone, taking Aylo's servant along with him. "Now," said I, very calmly, I know by your face you are going to tell me a lie. I do swear to you solemn-

* Hortus Siccus, a large book for extending and preserving dry plants.

ly, you never, by that means, will obtain any thing from me, no not so much as a good word ; truth and good behaviour will get you every thing ; what appears a great matter in your sight is not perhaps of such value in mine ; but nothing except truth and good behaviour will answer to you ; now I know for a certainty you are no more sick than I am.” — “ Sir, said he, with a very confident look, you are right ; I did counterfeit ; I neither have been, nor am I at present any way out of order ; but I thought it best to tell you so, not to be obliged to discover another reason that has much more weight with me why I cannot go to Geesh, and much less shew myself at the sources of the Nile, which I confess are not much beyond it, though I declare to you there is still a *bill* between you and those sources.” — “ And pray, said I calmly, what is this mighty reason ? have you had a dream, or a vision in that trance you fell into when you lagged behind below the church of St. Michael Sacala ? ” “ No, says he, it is neither trance, nor dream, nor devil either ; I wish it was no worse ; but you know as well as I, that my master Fasil defeated the Agows at the battle of Banja. I was there with my master, and killed several men, among whom some were of the Agows of this village Geesh, and you know the usage of this country, when a man, in these circumstances, falls into their hands, his blood must pay for their blood.”

I burst out into a violent fit of laughter, which very much disconcerted him. "There, said I, did not I say to you it was a lie that you was going to tell me? do not think I disbelieve or dispute with you the vanity of having killed men; many men were slain at that battle; somebody must, and you may have been the person who slew them; but do you think that I can believe that Fasil, so deep in that account of blood, could rule the Agows in the manner he does, if he could not put a servant of his in safety among them 20 miles from his residence; do you think I can believe this?" "Come, come, said Aylo's servant to Woldo, did you not hear that truth and good behaviour will get you every thing you ask? Sir, continues he, I see this affair vexes you, and what this foolish man wants will neither make you richer nor poorer; he has taken a great desire for that crimson silk-sash which you wear about your middle. I told him to stay till you went back to Gondar; but he says he is to go no farther than to the house of Shalaka Welled Amlac in Maitsha, and does not return to Gondar; I told him to stay till you had put your mind at ease, by seeing the fountains of the Nile, which you are so anxious about. He said, after that had happened, he was sure you would not give it him, for you seemed to think little of the cataract at Goutto, and of all the fine rivers and churches which he had shewn you; except the head of the Nile shall be finer than all these, when, in reality, it will

will be just like another river, you will then be dissatisfied, and not give him the sash."

I thought there was something very natural in these suspicions of Woldo; besides, he said he was certain that, if ever the sash came into the fight of Welled Amlac, by some means or other he would get it into his hands. This rational discourse had pacified me a little; the sash was a handsome one; but it must have been fine indeed to have stood for a minute between me and the accomplishment of my wishes. I laid my hand then upon the pistols that stuck in my girdle, and drew them out to give them to one of my suite, when Woldo, who apprehended it was for another purpose, ran some paces back, and hid himself behind Aylo's servant. We were all diverted at this fright, but none so much as Strates, who thought himself revenged for the alarm he had given him by falling through the roof of the house at Goutto. After having taken off my sash, "Here is your sash, Woldo, said I; but mark what I have said, and now most seriously repeat to you, Truth and good behaviour will get any thing from me; but if, in the course of this journey, you play one trick more, though ever so trifling, I will bring such a vengeance upon your head that you shall not be able to find a place to hide it in, when not the sash only will be taken from you, but your skin also will follow it: remember what happened to the seis at Bamba."

He

He took the fash, but seemed terrified at the threat, and began to make apologies. "Come, come, said I, we understand each other; no more words; it is now late, lose no more time, but carry me to Geesh, and the head of the Nile directly, without preamble, and shew me the hill that separates me from it. He then carried me round to the south side of the church, out of the grove of trees that surrounded it. "This is the hill, says he, looking archly, that, when you was on the other side of it, was between you and the fountains of the Nile; there is no other; look at that hillock of green sod in the middle of that watery spot, it is in that the two fountains of the Nile are to be found: Geesh is on the face of the rock where yon green trees are: if you go the length of the fountains pull off your shoes as you did the other day, for these people are all Pagans, worse than those that were at the ford, and they believe in nothing that you believe, but only in this river, to which they pray every day as if it were God; but this perhaps you may do likewise." Half undressed as I was by the loss of my fash, and throwing my shoes off, I ran down the hill towards the little island of green sods, which was about two hundred yards distant; the whole side of the hill was thick grown over with flowers, the large bulbous roots of which appearing above the surface of the ground, and their skins coming off on treading upon them, occasioned two very severe falls before I reached the brink of the marsh;

I after

I after this came to the island of green turf, which was in form of an altar, apparently the work of art, and I stood in rapture over the principal fountain which rises in the middle of it.

It is easier to guess than to describe the situation of my mind at that moment—standing in that spot which had baffled the genius, industry, and inquiry of both ancients and moderns, for the course of near three thousand years. Kings had attempted this discovery at the head of armies, and each expedition was distinguished from the last, only by the difference of the numbers which had perished, and agreed alone in the disappointment which had uniformly, and without exception, followed them all. Fame, riches, and honour, had been held out for a series of ages to every individual of those myriads these princes commanded, without having produced one man capable of gratifying the curiosity of his sovereign, or wiping off this stain upon the enterprise and abilities of mankind, or adding this desideratum for the encouragement of geography. Though a mere private Briton, I triumphed here, in my own mind, over kings and their armies; and every comparison was leading nearer and nearer to presumption, when the place itself where I stood, the object of my vain-glory, suggested what depressed my short-lived triumphs. I was but a few minutes arrived at the sources of the Nile, through numberless dangers and sufferings, the least of which would have overwhelmed me but for the continual

continual goodness and protection of Providence ; I was, however, but then half through my journey, and all those dangers which I had already passed, awaited me again on my return. I found a despondency gaining ground fast upon me, and blasting the crown of laurels I had too rashly woven for myself. I resolved therefore to divert, till I could on more solid reflection overcome its progress.

I saw Strates expecting me on the side of the hill. "Strates, said I, faithful squire, come and triumph with your Don Quixote at that island of Barataria where we have wisely and fortunately brought ourselves ; come and triumph with me over all the kings of the earth, all their armies, all their philosophers, and all their heroes."—"Sir, says Strates, I do not understand a word of what you say, and as little what you mean ; you very well know I am no scholar ; but you had much better leave that bog, come into the house, and look after Woldo ; I fear he has something further to seek than your sash, for he has been talking with the old devil worshipper ever since we arrived."—"Did they speak secretly together, said I?"—"Yes, Sir, they did, I assure you."—"And in whispers, Strates!"—"As for that, replied he, they need not have been at the pains ; they understand one another, I suppose, and the devil their master understands them both ; but as for me I comprehend their discourse no more than if it was Greek, *as they say*. Greek ! says he,

he, I am an ass ; I should know well enough what they said if they spoke Greek."---" Come, said I, take a draft of this excellent water, and drink with me a health to his majesty king George III. and a long line of princes." I had in my hand a large cup made of a cocoa-nut shell, which I procured in Arabia, and which was brim-full. He drank to the king speedily and chearfully, with the addition of, " Confusion to his enemies," and tossed up his cup with a loud huzza. " Now friend, said I, here is to a more humble, but still a sacred name, here is to --Maria !" Me asked if that was the Virgin Mary ? I answered, " In faith, I believe so, Strates." He did not speak, but only gave a humph of disapprobation.

The day had been very hot, and the altercation I had with Woldo had occasioned me to speak so much that my thirst, without any help from curiosity, led me to these frequent libations at this long sought-for spring, the most ancient of all altars. " Strates, said I, here is to our happy return. Come, friend, you are yet two toasts behind me ; can you ever be satisfied with this excellent water ?"---" Look you, Sir, says he very gravely, as for king George I drank to him with all my heart, to his wife, to his children, to his brothers and sisters, God blefs them all ! Amen ; but as for the Virgin Mary, as I am no Papist, I beg to be excused from drinking healths which *my church* does not drink. As for our happy return, God knows, there is no one wishes it more

sincerely

sincerely than I do, for I have been long weary of this beggarly country. But you must forgive me if I refuse to drink any more water. They say these savages pray over that hole every morning to the devil, and I am afraid I feel his horns in my belly already, from the great draught of that hellish water I drank first." It was, indeed, as cold water as ever I tasted. "Come, come, said I, don't be peevish, I have but one toast more to drink." "Peevish, or not peevish, replied Strates, a drop of it never again shall cross my throat: there is no humour in this; no joke; shew us something pleasant as you used to do; but there is no jest in meddling with devil-worshippers, witchcraft, and enchantments, to bring some disease upon one's self here, so far from home in the fields. No, no, as many toasts in wine as you please, or better in brandy, but no more water for Strates. I am sure I have done myself harm already with these follies---God forgive me!" "Then, said I, I will drink it alone, and you are henceforward unworthy of the name of Greek; you do not even deserve that of a Christian." Holding the full cup then to my head, "Here is to Catharine, empress of all the Russians, and success to her heroes at Paros; and hear my prediction from this altar to day, Ages shall not pass, before this ground, whereon I now stand, will become a flourishing part of her dominions."

He leaped on this a yard from the ground. "If the old gentleman has whispered you this, says he,

he, out of the well, he has not kept you a long time waiting; tell truth and shame the devil, is indeed the proverb, but truth is truth, wherever it comes from; give me the cup, I will drink that health though I should die." He then held out both his hands. "Strates, said I, be in no such haste; remember the water is enchanted by devil-worshippers; there is no jesting with these, and you are far from home, and in the fields, you may catch some disease, especially if you drink the Virgin Mary; God forgive you. Remember the horns the first draught produced; they may with this come entirely through and through." "The cup, the cup, says he, and--fill it full; I defy the devil, and trust in St. George and the dragon. Here is to Catharine, empress of all the Russias, confusion to her enemies, and damnation to all at Paros." "Well, friend, said I, you was long in resolving, but you have done it at last to some purpose; I am sure I did not drink damnation to all at Paros." "Ah, says he, but *I did*, and will do it again--Damnation to all at Paros, and Cyprus, and Rhodes, Crete, and Mytilene into the bargain: Here it goes with all my heart. Amen, so be it." "And who do you think, said I, are at Paros?" "Pray, who should be there, says he, but Turks and devils, the worst race of monsters and oppressors in the Levant; I have been at Paros myself; was you ever there?" "Whether I was ever there or not is no matter, said I; the empress's fleet, and an army of Russians, are now possibly

possibly there ; and here you, without provocation, have drank damnation to the Russian fleet and army who have come so far from home, and are at this moment sword in hand to restore you to your liberty, and the free exercise of your religion ; did not I tell you, you was no Greek, and scarcely deserved the name of Christian ?”

——“ No, no, Sir, cries Strates, for God’s sake do not say so, I would rather die. I did not understand you about Paros ; there was no malice in my heart against the Russians. God will bless them, and my folly can do them no harm---Huzza, Catharine, and victory !” whilst he tossed his cap into the air.

A number of the Agows had appeared upon the hill, just before the valley, in silent wonder what Strates and I were doing at the altar. Two or three only had come down to the edge of the swamp, had seen the grimaces and action of Strates, and heard him huzza ; on which they had asked Woldo, as he entered into the village, what was the meaning of all this ? Woldo told them, that the man was out of his senses, and had been bit by a mad dog ; which reconciled them immediately to us. They, moreover, said, he would be infallibly cured by the Nile ; but the custom, after meeting with such a misfortune,* was to drink the water in the morning fasting. I was very well pleased both with this turn Woldo gave the action, and the
remedy

remedy we stumbled upon by mere accident, which discovered a connection, believed to subsist at this day, between this river and its ancient governor the dog-star.

C H A P. XIII.

Attempts of the Ancients to discover the Source of the Nile—No Discovery made in latter Times—No Evidence of the Jesuits having arrived there--- Kircher's Account fabulous---Discovery completely made by the Author.

FAR in antiquity as history or tradition can lead us, farther still beyond the reach of either, (if we believe it was the first subject of hieroglyphics) begins the inquiry into the origin, cause of increase, and course, of this famous river. It is one of the few phænomena in natural history that ancient philosophers employed themselves in investigating, and people of all ranks seemed to have joined in the research with a degree of perseverance very uncommon; but still this discovery, though often attempted under the most favourable circumstances, has as constantly miscarried; it has baffled the endeavours of all ages, and at last come down, as great a secret as ever, to these latter times of bold and impartial inquiry.

Though

Though Egypt was not created by the Nile, it was the first part that received benefit from it ; it was there, in the time of its overflowing, that it appeared in all its beauty, and Egypt measured its prosperity or desolation by the abundance or scantiness of this stream. It was not, however, in Egypt the inquiries into the time and cause of its inundation began ; all these were settled and reduced to rule before a city was built within the reach of the inundation.

Man, that knew not the cause, was also ignorant of the limits of that inundation, having only in his mind a tradition of deluges that had destroyed the earth, traces of which appeared on every hill. He was with reason astonished to see, that, wild and wide as the torrent appeared, it was subject to the controul of some power that prohibited it from irregularity in the time of its coming, and forbade it to destroy the land it was destined to enrich ; they saw it subside within its banks, and to overflow no more after it afforded to husbandry the utmost advantage it could receive. But what the controuling power was they knew not, consequently could never divine whether this regularity was transitory or perpetual ; whether it was not liable, at some time, to break its bonds, and sweep both man and his labours together into the ocean.

Whether the Nile was constant to its time of rising, whether it did not revolve in some cycle or period, or whether, arrived at a certain number
of

of inundations, it was not to stop and overflow no more, was what could only be determined by the investigation of the cause, and the observations of a series of years. Before this was thoroughly settled and known, the farmer might perhaps cultivate the plain of Egypt, but would not build there; he would fix his dwelling on the mountain in defiance of the flood; and that this was so, is evident from what we saw at Thebes, which the Aborigines did not build, as we see thousands of caves dug out of solid rock that were the dwellings of the first inhabitants, the Troglodytes, beyond Meroë.

The philosophers of Meroë seem therefore to have been the first that undertook the compiling a series of observations, which should teach their posterity the proper times in which they could settle in, and cultivate Egypt, without fear of danger from the Nile. That island, full of flocks and shepherds, under a sky perpetually cloudless, having a twilight of short duration, was placed between the Nile and Astaboras, where the two rivers collect the waters that fall in the east and the west of Ethiopia, and mix together in a latitude where the tropical rains cease; this land was too high to be overflowed by the Nile, but near enough to behold every alteration in that river's increase from the instant it happened.

Sirius, the brightest star in the Heavens, probably the largest, perhaps the nearest to us, in either case the most obvious and useful for the present

sent purpose, was immediately vertical to Meroë; and it did not long escape observation, that the heliacal rising of the dog-star was found to be the instant when all Egypt was to prepare for the reception of a stranger-flood, without which the husbandman's labour and expectation of harvest were in vain. The fields were dusty and desert, the farms without tenants, the tenants without seed, the houses perhaps situated in the middle of the inundation, when, at a stated time, this most brilliant sign shone forth to warn the master to procure a peasant for his field, the peasant to procure seed for his tenement, and the stranger to remove his habitation from a situation soon destined to be laid wholly under water.

Nothing could be more natural than the inquiries how the encrease of the flood was thus connected with the rising of the dog-star; many useful discoveries were therefore probably made in search after this, but the cause of the inundation remained still undiscovered; at last the effects being found regular, and the efficient cause inscrutable, no wonder if gratitude transferred to the star a portion of respect for the benefits they were persuaded they received from its influence. Tho' these observations were such as concerned Egypt and Nubia alone, yet from Egypt they passed as objects proper for inquiry, as problems of the greatest consequence to philosophers, and as phenomena worthy the attention of all that studied nature.

A great step towards the accounting for these phenomena was believed to be the discovery of the Nile's source, and this, as it was attended with very considerable difficulties, was thought therefore to be a proper object of investigation, even by kings, who discovered nations by conquering them, and by their power, revenue, and armies, removed most of those obstacles which, succeeding each others in detail, weary the diligence, overcome the courage, and baffle the endeavours of the most intrepid and persevering travellers.

Sesostris, one of the earliest and greatest conquerors of antiquity, is mentioned, amidst all his victories, earnestly to have desired to penetrate to the head of the Nile, as a glory he preferred to almost universal monarchy:—

*Venit ad occasum, mundique extrema Sesostris,
Et Pharios currus regum cervicibus egit:
Antè tamen vestros amnes Rhodanúmque, Padúm-
que,
Quàm Nilum de fonte bibit.—*

LUCAN.

Cambyfes' attempt to penetrate into Ethiopia,
and

and the defeat of his schemes, I have already narrated at sufficient length.

—————*Vesantus in ortus*
Cambyfes longi populos pervenit ad ævi,
Defectusque epulis, & pastus cæde suorum
Ignoto te, Nile, redit—————

LUCAN.

The attention paid by Alexander, the next prince who attempted an expedition towards these unknown fountains, merits a little more of our consideration. After he had conquered Egypt, and was arrived at the temple of Jupiter Ammon, (the celebrated and ancient deity of the shepherds) in the Theban desert, the first question he asked was concerning the spot where the Nile rose. Having received from the priests sufficient directions for attempting the discovery, he is said, as the next very sensible step, to have chosen natives of Ethiopia as the likeliest people to succeed in the search he commanded them to make :—

Summes Alexander regum, quem Memphis adorat,
Invidit Nilo, misitque per ultima terræ
Æthiopum lectos : illos rubicunda perusti
Zona poli tenuit, Nilum videre calentem.

LUCAN.

These Ethiopians, parting from their temple in the desert of Elvah, or Oasis, or, which will come to the same thing, from the banks of the Nile, or Thebes, would hold nearly the same course as Poncet had done, till they fell in with the Nile about Moscho in the kingdom of Dongola; they would continue the same route till they came to Halfaia, where the Bahar el Abiad (or white river) joins the Nile at Hojila, five miles above that town; and, to avoid the mountains of Kuara, they would continue on the west side of the Nile, between it and the Bahar el Abiad; and, keeping the Nile close on their left, they would follow its directions south to the mountains of Fazuclo, through countries where its course must necessarily be known. After having passed the great chain of mountains, called Dyre and Tegla. between lat. 11° and 12° N. where are the great cataracts, they again came into the flat country of the Gongas, as far as Bizamo, nearly in 9° N. there the river, leaving its hitherto constant direction, N. and S. turns due E. and surrounds Gojam.

It is probable the discoverers, always looking for it to the south, took this unusual sudden turn east to be only a winding of the river, which would soon be compensated by an equal return to the west where they would meet it again; they therefore continued their journey south, till near the line, and never saw it more, as they could have no possible notion it had turned back behind them

them, and that they had left it as far north as lat. 11° . They reported then to Alexander what was truth, that they had ascended the Nile as far south as lat. 9° , where it unexpectedly took its course to the east, and was seen no more. The river, moreover, was not known, nor to be heard of near the Line, or farther southward, nor was it diminished in size, nor had it given any symptom they were near its source; they had found the Nile *calentem*, (warm) while they expected its rise among melting snows.

This discovery (for so far it was one) of the course of the river to the east, seems to have made a strong impression on Alexander's mind, so that when he arrived at near the head of the Indus, then swelled with the thawing snows of mount Caucasus, and overflowing in summer, he thought he was arrived at the source of this famous river the Nile which he had before seen in the west, and rejoiced at it exceedingly, as the noblest of his achievements*; he immediately wrote to acquaint his mother of it; but being soon convinced of his error, and being far above propagating a falsehood, even for his own glory, he instantly erased what he had wrote upon that subject. This however did not entirely dissatisfy Alexander, for he proposed an expedition in person towards these fountains, if he had returned from India in safety.

* Arrianus de Exped. Alexandri, lib. vi.

——— *Non illi flamma, nec unda,
 Nec sterilis Libye, nec Syrticus obstitit Ammon.
 Iffet in occasus, mundi devexa secutus:
 Ambissetque polas, Nilumque a fonte bibisset:
 Occurrit suprema dies, naturaue solum,
 Hunc potuit finem vesano ponere regi.*

LUCAN.

It must no doubt seem preposterous to those that are not very conversant with the classics, that a prince so well instructed as Alexander himself was, who had with him in his army many philosophers, geographers, and astronomers, and was in constant correspondence with Aristotle, a man of almost universal knowledge, that, after having seen the Nile in Egypt coming from the south, he should think he was arrived at the head of it while on the banks of the Indus, so far to the N. E. of its Ethiopian course. This difficulty, however, has a very easy solution in the prejudices of those times. The ancients were incorrigible as to their error in opinion concerning two seas.

The Caspian Sea they had sailed through in several directions, and had almost marched round it; and whilst they conquered kingdoms between it and the sea, its water was sweet, it neither ebbed nor flowed, and yet they most ridiculously would have it to be part of the ocean. On the other hand, they obstinately persisted in believing that, from the east coast of Africa, about latitude 15° south, a neck of land ran east and north-east, and
 joined

joined the peninsula of India, and by that means made this part of the ocean a lake. In vain ships of different nations sailed for ages to Sofala, and saw no such land : this only made them remove the neck of land further to the south ; and though Eudoxus had sailed from the Red Sea around the Cape of Good Hope, which must have totally destroyed the possibility of the existence of that land supposed to join the two continents, rather than allow this, they neglected the information of this navigator, and treated it as a fable.

It was the constant opinion of the Greeks, that no river could rise in the torrid zone, as also, that the melting of snow was the cause of the overflowing of all rivers in the heat of summer, and so of the Nile among the rest ; when, therefore, Alexander heard from his discoverers, that the Nile, about latitude 9° . ran straight to the east, and returned no more, he imagined the river's course was eastward through the imaginary neck of land inclosing the imaginary lake, and joining the peninsula of India, and that the river, after it had crossed, continued north till it came within reach of the thawing of the snows of Mount Caucasus ; and this was also the opinion of Ptolemy the geographer.

Ptolemy Philadelphus, the second of those princes who had succeeded to the throne of Alexander in Egypt, was the next who marched into Ethiopia with an army against the Shangalla. His object was not only to discover the source of the

Nile,

Nile, but also to procure a perpetual supply of elephants to enable him to cope with the kings of Syria. The success of this expedition we have related in the second volume, book ii. chap. v.

Ptolemy Evergetes, his successor, in the 27th year of his reign, being in peace with all his neighbours, undertook an expedition to Ethiopia. His design was certainly to discover the fountains of the Nile, in which he had probably succeeded had he not mistaken the river itself. He supposed the Siris, now the Tacazzé, was the Nile, and, after ascending in the direction of its stream, he came to Axum, the capital of the province of Siré and of Ethiopia. But the story he tells about the snow which he found knee-deep on the mountains of Samen, makes me question whether he ever crossed the Siris, or was himself an ocular witness of what he says he observed there.

To Caesar, between the acquisition of a rich and powerful kingdom, and the enjoyment of the finest woman in the world, the queen of it, is said to have employed so interesting an interval in a calm inquiry after the source of this river, and, in so doing at such a time, surely has paid it a greater compliment than it ever yet received from any that attempted the discovery. On that night, which completed the destruction of the Egyptian monarchy, it is said this was the topic upon which he entertained the learned of Alexandria

at

at supper; addressing himself to Achoreus, high priest of the Nile, he says,

——— *Nil est, quod noscere malim,
Quam fluvii causas, per secunda tanta latentis,
Ignotumque caput: spes sit mihi certa videndi
Niliacos fontes, bellum civile relinquam.*

LUCAN.

The poet here pays Cæsar a compliment upon his curiosity, or desire of knowledge, very much at the expence of his patriotism; for he makes him declare, in so many words, that he considered making war with his country as the greatest pleasure of his life, never to be abandoned, but for that superior gratification—the discovery of the fountains of the Nile.

Achoreus, proud of being referred to on such a subject by such a person, enters into a detail of information.

*Quæ tibi noscendi Nilum, Romane, cupido est,
Hæc Phariis, Persisque fuit, Macedumque ty-
rannis:*

*Nullaque non ætas voluit conferre futuris
Notitiam: sed vincit adhuc natura latendi.*

LUCAN.

Nero, as we are told, sent two centurions in search of this river, and on their return they made their report in presence of Seneca, who does not seem

seem to have greatly distinguished himself by his inquiries. They reported, that after having gone a very long way, they came to a king of Ethiopia, who furnished them with necessaries and assistance, and with his recommendations they arrived at some other kingdoms next to these, and then came to immense lakes, the end of which was unknown to the natives, nor did any one ever hope to find it: this was all the satisfaction Nero procured, and it is probable these centurions went not far, but were discouraged, and turned back with a trumped-up story invented to cover their want of spirit, for we know now that there are no such lakes between Egypt and the source of the Nile, but the lake of Tzana, or Dembea, and while on the banks of this, they might have seen the country beyond, and on every side of it*; but I rather think no such attempt was made, unless they endeavoured to pass the country of the Shangalla about the end of June or July, when that province, as I have already said, is absolutely impassable, by the rapid vegetation of the trees, and the ground being all laid under water, which they might have mistaken for a series of lakes.

After all these great efforts, the learned of antiquity began to look upon the discovery as desperate, and not to be attained, for which reason

* Another reason why I think this journey of the centurions is fictitious is, that they say the distance between Syene and Meroe is 660 miles. Plin. lib. 6. cap. 29.

both poets and historians speak of it in a strain of despondency:—

*Secreto de fonte cadens : qui semper inani
Quaerendus ratione latet, nec contigit ulli,
Hoc vidisse caput, fertur sine teste creatus.*



CLAUDIAN.

And Pliny, as late as the time of Trajan, says, that these fountains were in his time utterly unknown—*Nilus incertis ortus fontibus, it per desertæ et ardentia, et immenso longitudinis spatio ambulans**, —nor was there any other attempt made later by the ancients.

From this it is obvious, that none of the ancients ever made this discovery of the source of the Nile. They gave it up entirely, and *caput Nili quaerere* became a proverb, marking the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of any undertaking. Let us now examine the pretensions of the moderns.

The first in latter days who visited Abyssinia was a monk, and at the same time a merchant; he was sent by Nonnosus, ambassador of the emperor Justin, in the fifth year of the reign of that prince, that is A. D. 522. He is called Cosmas the hermit, as also Indoplaustes. Many have thought that this name was given him from his having travelled much in India, properly so call-

* Pliny, Nat. Hist. lib. v. cap. 9.

ed;

ed; but we have no evidence that Cosmas was ever in the Asiatic India, and I rather imagine he obtained his name from his travels in Abyssinia, called by the ancients India; he went as far as Axum, and seems to have paid proper attention to the difference of climates, names, and situations of places, but he arrived not at the Nile, nor did he attempt it. The province of the Agows was probably at that time inaccessible, as the court was then in Tigré at Axum, a considerable distance beyond the Tacazzé, and is to the eastward of it.

None of the Portuguese who first arrived in Abyssinia, neither Covillan, Roderigo de Lima, Christopher de Gama, nor the patriarch Alphonso Mendes, ever saw, or indeed pretended to have seen, the source of the Nile. At last, in the reign of Za Denghel, came Peter Paez, who laid claim to this honour; how far his pretensions are just I am now going to consider.—Paez has left a history of the mission, and some remarkable occurrences that happened in that country, in two thick volumes octavo, closely written in a plain stile; copies of this work were circulated through every college and seminary of Jesuits that existed in his time, and which have been every where found in their libraries since the disgrace of that learned body.

Athanasius Kircher, a Jesuit, well known for his extensive learning and voluminous writings, and still more for the rashness with which he advances

vances the most improbable facts in natural history, is the man that first published an account of the fountains of the Nile, and, as he says, from this journal left by Peter Paez.

I must, however, here observe, that no relation of this kind was to be found in three copies of Peter Paez's history, to which I had access when in Italy, on my return home. One of these copies I saw at Milan, and, by the interest of friends, had an opportunity of perusing it at my leisure. The other two were at Bologna and Rome. I ran through them rapidly, attending only to the place where the description ought to have been, and where I did not find it; but having copied the first and last page of the Milan manuscript, and comparing them with these two last mentioned, I found that all the three were, word for word, the same, and none of them contained one syllable of the discovery of the source.

However this be, I do not think it is right for me to pronounce thus much, unless I bring collateral proofs to strengthen my opinion, and to shew that no such excursion was ever pretended to have been made by that missionary, in any of his works, unless that which passed through the hand of Kircher.

Alphonso Mendes came into Abyssinia about a year after Paez's death. New and desirable as that discovery must have been to himself, to the pope, king of Spain, and all his great patrons in Portugal and Italy, though he wrote the history
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of the country, and of the particulars concerning the mission in great detail, and with good judgment, yet he never mentions this journey of Peter Paez, though it probably must have been conveyed to Rome and Portugal, after his inspection, and under his authority.

Balthazar Tellez, a learned Jesuit, has wrote two volumes in folio with great candour and impartiality, considering the spirit of those times; and he declares his work to be compiled from this history of Alphonso Mendes the patriarch, from the two volumes of Peter Paez, as well as from the regular reports made by the individuals of the company in some places, and by the provincial letters in others; to all which he had compleat access, as also to the annual reports of Peter Paez among the rest, from 1598 to 1622; yet Tellez makes no mention of such a discovery, though he is very particular as to the merit of each missionary during the long reign of Sultan Segued, or Socinios, which occupies more than half of the two volumes.

After these strong presumptions, that Peter Paez neither made such a journey nor ever pretended it, I shall submit the account that Paez himself, or Kircher for him, has given of the expedition and consequent discovery; and if any of my readers can persuade themselves that a man of genius, such as was Peter Paez, transported by accident to these fountains, and exulting as he does upon the discovery, the value of which he seems

seems to have known well, could yet have given such a description as he does, I am then contented with being only the partner of Peter Paez.

Before I state the account of his observations in his own, or in Kircher's words, I have one observation to make regarding the dates and time of the journey. That memorable day which has been fixed upon for the discovery, is the 21st of April 1611. The rains are then begun, and on that account the season being very unwholesome, armies, without extreme necessity, are rarely in the field; between September and February at farthest is the time the Abyssinian army is abroad from the capital, and in action.

There are two nations of Agows in Abyssinia, the one near the fountains of the Nile, called the Agows of Damot; the other near the head of the Tacazzé, in the province of Lasta, called the Tcheratz Agows. Now, we see from the annals of Socinios's reign, that he had several campaigns against the Agows. The first was in the fourth year of his reign, in 1608; his annals say it was against the Tcheratz Agow. His second campaign was in the seventh year of his reign, or 1611; that, too, was against the Agows of Lasta; so that if Peter Paez was with the emperor in either of these campaigns, he could not have seen the head of any river but that of the Tacazzé. The third campaign was in 1625, against Sacala, Geesh, and Ashoa, when the Galla made an inroad into Gojam, but retired upon the royal army's marching

ing against them, and crossed the Nile into their own country. Socinios upon this had advanced against the Agows of Damot, then in rebellion also, and had fought with Sacala, Afhoa, and Geesh likewise, the clan immediately contiguous to the sources. Now this was surely the time when Peter Paez, or any attendant on the emperor, might have seen the fountains of the Nile in safety, as the king's army, in whole or in part, must have been encamped near, or perhaps upon, the very sources themselves; a place, of all others, suited for such a purpose; but this was in the year 1625, and Peter Paez died in the year 1622.

I shall now state, in Kircher's own words, translated into English, the description he has given, as from Paez, of the sources which he saw; and I will fairly submit, to any reader of judgment, whether this is a description he ought to be content with from an eye-witness, whether it may not suit the sources of any other river as well as those of the Nile, or whether in itself it is distinct enough to leave one clear idea behind it.

“ The river *, at this day, by the Ethiopians is called Abaoy; it rises in the kingdom of Gojam, in a territory called Sabala, whose inhabitants are called Agows. The source of the Nile is situated on the west part of Gojam, in the highest part of a valley, which resembles a great plain on every side, surrounded by high mountains. On

* In *Œdipo Syntagma*, I. cap. vii. p. 57.

the 21st of April, in the year 1618, being here, together with the king and his army, I ascended the *place*, and observed every thing with great attention; I discovered first two round fountains, each about four palms in diameter, and saw, with the greatest delight, what neither Cyrus * king of the Persians, nor Cambyfes, nor Alexander the Great, nor the famous Julius Cæsar, could ever discover. The two openings of these fountains have no issue in the plain on the top of the mountain, but flow from the root of it. The second fountain lies about a stone-cast west from the first: the inhabitants say that this whole mountain is full of water, and add, that the whole plain about the fountain is floating and unsteady, a certain mark that there is water concealed under it; for which reason, the water does not overflow at the fountain, but forces itself with great violence out at the foot of the mountain. The inhabitants, together with the emperor, who was then present with his army, maintain that that year it trembled little on account of the drought, but other years, that it trembled and overflowed so as that it could scarce be approached without danger. The breadth of the circumference may be about the cast of a sling: below the top of this mountain the people live about a league distant from the fountain to the west; and this place is called Geesh, and the fountain seems to be a cannon-shot distant from

* I never heard that Cyrus had attempted this discovery.

Geesh; moreover, the field where the fountain is, is upon all sides difficult of access, except on the north side, where it may be ascended with ease."

I shall make only a few observations upon this description, sufficient to shew that it cannot be that of Paez, or any man who had ever been in Abyssinia: there is no such place known as Sabala; he should have called it Sacala: in the Ethiopic language Sacala means the highest ridge of land, where the water falls down equally on both sides, from east and west, or from north and south. So the sharp roofs of our houses, or tops of our tents, in that manner are called Sacala, because the water runs down equally on opposite sides; so does it in the highest lands in every country, and so here in Sacala, where the Nile runs to the north, but several streams, which form the rivers Lac and Temsi, fall down the cliff, or precipice, and proceed southward in the plain of Afhoa about 300 feet below the level of the ground where the mountain of Geesh stands, at the very foot of which is the marsh wherein are the sources of the river.

Again, neither Sacala nor Geesh are on the west side of Gojam, nor approach to these directions; as, first the high mountains of Litchambara, then the still higher of Amid Amid, are to be crossed over, before you reach Gojam from Sabala; and after descending from that high barrier of mountains called Amid Amid, you come into the
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the province of Damot, when the whole breadth of that province is still between you and the west part of Gojam. These are mistakes which it is almost impossible to make, when a man is upon the spot, in the midst of a whole army, every one capable, and surely willing (as he was a favourite of the king) to give him every sort of information; nor was there probably any one there who would not have thought himself honoured to have been employed to fetch a *straw* for him from the top of Amid Amid.

Both the number and situations of the fountains, and the situations of the mountain and village of Geesh with respect to them, are therefore absolutely false, as the reader will observe in attending to my narrative and the map. This relation of Paez's was in my hand the 5th of November, when I surveyed these fountains, and all the places adjacent. I measured all his distances with a Gunter's chain in my own hand, and found every one of them to be imaginary; and these measures so taken, as also the journal now submitted to the public, were fairly and fully written the same day that they were made, before the close of each evening.

It is not easy to conceive what species of information Paez intends to convey to us by the observation he makes lower, "That the water, which found way at the foot of the mountain, did not flow at the top of it." It would have been very singular if it had; and I fully believe that a

mountain voiding the water at its top, when it had free access to run out at its bottom, would have been one of the most curious things the two Jesuits could ever have seen in any voyage. But what mountain is it he is speaking of? he has never named any one, but has said the Nile was situated in the highest part of a plain. I cannot think he means by this that the highest part of a plain is a mountain; if he does, it is a species of description which would need an interpreter. He says again, the mountain is full of water, and trembles; and that there is a village below the top of the mountain, on the mountain itself. This I never saw; they must have cold and slippery quarters in that mountain, or whatever it is; and if he means the mountain of Geesh, there is not a village within a quarter of a mile of it. The village of Geesh is in the middle of a high cliff, descending into the plain of Ashoa. The bottom of that cliff or plain is 300 feet, as I have already said, below the base of the mountain of Geesh, and the place where the fountains rise.

Paez next says, that it is three miles from that village of Geesh to the fountains of the Nile. Now, as my quadrant was placed in my tent, on the brink of the cliff of Geesh, it was necessary for me to measure that distance; and by allowing for it to reduce my observations to the exact spot where the sources rose, I did accordingly with a chain measure from the brink of the precipice to the center of the altar, in which the principal fountain stands,
and

and found it 1760 feet or 586 yards 2 feet, and this is the distance Paez calls a league, or the largest range of a shell shot from a mortar; this I do aver is an error that is absolutely impossible for any travellers to commit upon the spot, or else his narrative in general should have very little weight in point of precision.

I shall close these observations with one which I think must clearly evince Paez had never been upon the spot. He says the field, in which the fountains of the Nile are, is of very difficult access, the ascent to it being very steep, excepting on the north, where it is plain and easy. Now, if we look at the beginning of this description, we should think it would be the descent, not the ascent that would be troublesome; for the fountains were placed in a valley, and people rather descend into valleys than ascend into them; but supposing it a valley in which there was a field, upon which there was a mountain, and on the mountain these fountains, still I say that these mountains are nearly inaccessible on the three sides, but that the most difficult of them all is the north, the way we ascend from the plain of Goutto. From the east, by Sacala, the ascent is made from the valley of Litchambara, and from the plain of Affoa, to the south, you have the almost perpendicular craggy cliff of Geesh, covered with thorny bushes, trees, and bamboos, which conceal the mouths of the caverns; and, on the north, you have the mountains of Aformasha, thick-set
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with all sorts of thorny shrubs and trees, especially with the kantuffa; these thickets are, moreover, full of wild beasts, especially huge, long-haired baboons, which we frequently met walking upright. Through these high and difficult mountains we have only narrow paths, like those of sheep, made by the goats, or the wild beasts we are speaking of, which, after we had walked on them for a long space, landed us frequently at the edge of some valley, or precipice, and forced us to go back again to search for a new road. From towards Zeegam, to the westward, and from the plain where the river winds so much, is the only easy access to the fountains of the Nile, and they that ascend to them by this way will not think even that approach too easy.

It remains only for me to say, that neither have the Jesuits, (Paez his brethren in the mission, and his contemporaries) made any geographical use of this discovery, either in longitude or latitude; nor have the historians of his society, who have followed afterwards, with all the information and documents before them, thought proper even to quote his travels; it will not be easy, from the authority of a man like Athanasius Kircher, writing at Rome, to support the reality of such a discovery, not to be found in the genuine writings of Peter Paez himself. With such a voyage, if it had been real, there should have been published at least an itinerary, and most of the Jesuits were capable enough to have made a rough observation
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of longitude and latitude, in the country where they resided, for near one hundred years. Add to this, no observation appears from any Jesuit of the idolatry or pagan worship, which prevailed near the source of the Nile, and this would seem to have been their immediate province.

From Dancaz they might have taken very properly their departure, and, by a compass, the use of which was then well known to the Portuguese, they might have kept their route to those fountains without much trouble, and, with a sufficient degree of exactness, to shew all the world the road by which they went. They were not fifty miles distant from Geesh when at Gorgora, and they have erred above sixty, which is ten miles more than the whole distance; this happened because they sought the fountains in Gojam, from which, at Gorgora, they knew themselves to be at that distance, and where the source of the Nile never was.

When I set out from Gondar, whose latitude and longitude I had first well ascertained, I thought in such a pursuit as this, where local discovery was the only thing sought after in all ages, that the best way was to substitute perhaps a drier journal, or itinerary, to a more pleasant account; with this view I kept the length of my journies each day by a watch, and my direction by the compass. I did observe, indeed, many altitudes of the sun and stars at Dingleber, at Kelti, and at Goutto; and lastly, I ascertained the other extreme,

treme, the sources of the Nile, by a number of observations of latitude, and by a very distinct and favourable one for the longitude; I calculated none of these celestial observations till I went back to Gondar. I returned by a different way on the other side of the Nile, and made one observation of the sun at Welled Abea Abbo, the house of Shalaka Welled Amlac, of whom I am about to speak. Arrived at Gondar, I summed up my days journies, reduced my bearings and distances to a plain course, as if I had been at sea, taking a mean where there was any thing doubtful, and in this topographical draught laid down every village through which I had passed, or which I had seen at a small distance out of the road, to which I may add every river, an immense number of which I had crossed between Gondar and Geesh, whither I was going. The reader, upon the inspection of this small map, will form some, but a very inadequate idea of the immense labour it cost me: However, the result, when I arrived at Gondar, amply rewarded me for my pains, upon comparing my route by the compass, to what it came to be when ascertained by observation; I found my error of computation upon the whole to be something more than 9 miles in latitude, and very nearly 7 in longitude; an error not perceptible in the journey upon any reduced scale, and very immaterial to all purposes of geography in any large one.

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Now Peter Paez, or any man laying claim to a discovery so long and so ardently desired, should surely have done the same; especially as from Gorgora he had little more than half of the journal to keep. But if it were true, that he made the discovery which Kircher attributes to him, still, for want of this necessary attention, he has left the world in the darkness he found it; he travelled like a thief, discovered that secret source, and took a peep at it, then covered it again as if he had been affrighted at the sight of it.

Ludolf and Vossius are very merry, without mentioning names, with this story of the discovery, which they think Kircher makes for Peter Paez, whom they call the River Finder: they say, it is extremely laughable to think, that the emperor of Abyssinia brought a Jesuit of Europe to be the antiquary of his country, and to instruct him first, that the fountains of the Nile were in his dominions, and in what part of them. But, with Vossius's leave, this is a species of intemperate ill-founded criticism; neither Kircher, nor Paez, nor whoever was author of that work, ever said they instructed the emperor about the place in his dominions where the Nile arose, as what he says is only that the Agows of Geesh reported that the mountain trembled in dry weather, and had done so that year, when the emperor, who was present, confirmed the Agows report: this is not saying that Peter Paez told the emperor encamped with his army upon the fountains, that the Nile rose in
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his dominions; and that this was the source. Woe be to the works of Scaliger, Bochart, or Vossius, when they shall, in their turn, be submitted to such criticism as this.

A Protestant mission was the next, that I know of at least, which succeeded that of the Portuguese, and consisted only of one traveller, Peter Heyling, of Lubec; although he lived in the country, nay, governed it several years, he never attempted to visit the source of that river; he had dedicated himself to a studious and solitary life, having, among other parts of his reading, a very competent knowledge of Roman, or civil law; he is said to have given a great deal of his time to the compiling an institute of that law in the Abyssinian language for the use of that nation, upon a plan he had brought from Germany; but he did not live to finish it, though that and two other books, written in Geez, still exist in private hands in Abyssinia, at least I have been often confidently told so.

The next and last attempt I shall take notice of, and one of the most extraordinary that ever was made for the discovery of the Nile, was that of a German nobleman, Peter Joseph le Roux, comte de Desneval. This gentleman had been in the Danish navy ever since the year 1721, and in 1739 was raised to the rank of rear-admiral in that service. He says, in a publication of his own now lying before me, that the ambassador of Louis XIV. (M. du Roule) and all those sent by the
Dutch

Dutch and English to visit that country, had perished, because they were ignorant of the proper *key* to be employed to enter that country, which he flattered himself he had found in Denmark.

In 1739 he resigned his Danish commission, and began his first attempt in Egypt, whilst, for the greater facility of travelling in these *mild* and *hospitable* countries, he took his wife along with him. The count and the countess went as far as Cairo, where they wisely began at a festival to dispute upon the etiquette with a Turkish mob, and this bringing the janizaries and guards of police upon them to take them into custody, the *grey mare*, as they say, proved the better *horse*; Madame la comtesse de Desneval exerted herself so much, that she defeated the body of janizaries, wounding several of them, armed only with a very feminine weapon, a pair of scissors, which, with full as much profit, and much more decency, she might have been using, surrounded with her family at home.

However well acquainted the count was with the key for entering into Abyssinia, he had not apparently got the door. In fact, his first scheme was a most ridiculous one; he resolved to ascend the Nile in a barge armed with small cannon, and all necessary provisions for himself and wife. Some people wiser than himself, whom he met at Cairo, suggested to him, that, supposing government might protect him so far as to allow his barge safely to pass the confines of Egypt and to the first cataract,

cataraft, where the malice of the pilots would certainly have destroyed her, and fupposing ſhe was arrived at Ibrim or Deir, the laſt garrifons depending on Cairo, and that this might have been atchieved by money, (for by money any thing may be obtained from the government of Cairo,) yet ſtill, ſome days journey above the garrifons of Deir and Ibrim, begin the barren and dreadful deſerts of Nubia; and farther ſouth, at the great cataraft of Jan Adel, the Nile falls twenty feet down a perpendicular rock; ſo here certainly was to be the end of his voyage; but the count, being ignorant of the manners of thoſe countries, and exceedingly preſumptuous of his own powers, flattered himſelf to obtain ſuch aſſiſtance from the garrifon of Ibrim and Deir, that he could unſcrew his veſſel, take her to pieces, and carry her, by force of men, round behind the cataraft, where he was to reſcrew and launch her again into the Nile.

The Kennoufs, inhabiting near the cataraft, have ſeveral villages, particularly two, one called Succoot, or the place of rents, where Kalid Ibn el Waalid, after taking Syene in the Khalifat of Omar, encamped his army in his march to Dongola; the other, in a plain near the river, called Aſel Dimmo, or the Field of Blood, where the ſame Kalid defeated an army of Nubians; who were marching to the relief of Dongola, which was by him immediately after beſieged and taken. Theſe two villages are on the Egyptian ſide of the cataraft;

cataraft; the direct occupation of the inhabitants is gathering senna, where it very much abounds, and they carry it in boats down to Cairo. Above, and on the other side of the cataraft, is another large village of the Kennoufs, called Takaki. Some of these miserable wretches, were brought to the count, and a treaty made, that all these men of the two villages were to assist him in his re-embarkation, after he had got his barge round the cataraft; and among these barbarians he would have lost his life.

The count, besides his wife, had brought with him his lieutenant, Mr. Norden, a Dane, who was to serve him as draughtsman; but neither the count, countess, nor lieutenant understood one word of the languages. There are always (happily for travellers) wise and honest men among the French and Venetian merchants at Cairo, who, seeing the obstinacy of the count, persuaded him that it was more military, and more in the stile of an admiral, to detach Norden, his inferior officer, to reconnoitre Ibrim, Deir, and the cataraft of Jan Adel, as also to renew his treaty with the Kennoufs at Succoot and Asel Dimmo.

Norden accordingly sailed in the common embarkations used upon the Nile; the voyage is in every body's hands. It has certainly a considerable deal of merit, but is full of squabbles and fightings with boat-men and porters, which might as well have been left out, as they lead to no instruction, but serve only to discourage travellers,
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for they were chiefly owing to ignorance of language. It was with the utmost difficulty, and after many disasters, that Norden arrived at Syenè, and the first cataract; after which greater and greater were encountered before he reached Ibran, where the Kascheff put him in prison, robbed him of what he had in the boat, and scarcely suffered him to return to Cairo without cutting his throat, which, for a considerable time, he and his soldiers had determined to do.

This sample of the difficulties, or rather impossibility of the voyage into Abyssinia by Nubia, discouraged the count; and much reason had he to be thankful that his attempt had not ended among the Kennoufs at Succoot. He therefore changed his plan, and resolved to enter Abyssinia by a voyage round the Cape into the Indian ocean, through the Straits of Babelmandeb into the Red Sea, and so to Masuah. In this voyage he began to make use of his Spanish commission, and, having taken two English ships, under protection of a neutral fort in the Isle of May, he was met there some days after by commodore Barnet, who made all his ships prizes, and sent the count home passenger in a Portuguese ship to Lisbon.

C H A P. XIV.

*Description of the Sources of the Nile—Of Geesh—
Accounts of its several Cataracts—Course from its
Rise to the Mediterranean.*

I HOPE that what I have now said will be thought sufficient to convince all impartial readers, that these celebrated sources have, as it were, by a fatality, remained to our days as unknown as they were to antiquity, no good or genuine voucher having yet been produced capable of proving that they were before discovered, or seen by the curious eye of any traveller, from earliest ages to this day; and it is with confidence I propose to my reader, that he will consider me as still standing at these fountains, and patiently hear from me the recital of the origin, course, names, and circumstances of this the most famous river in the world, which he will in vain seek from books, or from any other human authority whatever, and which, by the care and attention I have paid to the subject, will, I hope, be found satisfactory here:—

Non

————— *Non fabula mendax*

*Ausa loqui de fonte tuo est : ubicunque videris,
Quæreris ; et nulli contingit gloria genti,
Ut Nilo fit læta suo, tua flumina prodam,
Quâ Deus undarum celator, Nile, tuarum
Te mihi nôsse dedit.*—————

LUCAN.

The Agows of Damot pay divine honour to the Nile ; they worship the river, and thousands of cattle have been offered, and still are offered, to the spirit supposed to reside at its source. They are divided into clans, or tribes ; and it is worthy of observation, that it is said there never was a feud, or hereditary animosity between any two of these clans ; or, if the seeds of any such were sown, they did not vegetate longer than till the next general convocation of all the tribes, who meet annually at the source of the river, to which they sacrifice, calling it by the name of the *God of Peace*. One of the least considerable of these clans, for power and number, has still the preference among its brethren, from the circumstance that, in its territory, and near the miserable village that gives it name, are situated the much sought-for springs from which the Nile rises.

Geesh, however, though not farther distant from these than 600 yards, is not in sight of the sources of the Nile. The country, upon the same plane with the fountains, terminates in a cliff about 300 yards deep down the plain of Affoa, which

which flat country continues in the same subaltern degree of elevation, till it meets the Nile again about seventy miles southward, after it has made the circuit of the provinces of Gojam and Damot. This cliff seems purposely fashioned into many shelves or stages, each of which is occupied by a cluster of houses seldom above eight or ten in number; some above, some below, some along the side of each other, but chiefly occupying the space, or two-thirds of the middle of the cliff, that is, none of them nearer to the top of the cliff, nor to the plain of Affoa below, than a distance equal to that proportion of the whole. The reason of choosing this situation is the fear of the Galla, who have often invaded that part of Abyssinia, and have even exterminated some clans of Agows entirely.

In the middle of this cliff, in a direction straight north towards the fountains, is a prodigious cave, whether the work of nature or of art, I cannot determine; in it are many bye-paths, so that it is very difficult for a stranger to extricate himself; it is a natural labyrinth, large enough to contain the inhabitants of the village, and their cattle; there are likewise two or three lesser ones, which I did not see; in this large one, I tired myself part of several days, endeavouring to reach as far northward as possible, but the air, when I had advanced something above one hundred yards, seemed to threaten to extinguish my candle by its dampness; and the people were besides not at all disposed to

gratify my curiosity farther, after assuring me that there was nothing at the end more remarkable than I then saw, which I have reason to believe was the case.

The face of this cliff, which fronts to the south, has a most picturesque appearance from the plain of Affoa below, parts of the houses at every stage appearing, through the thickets of trees and bushes with which the whole face of the cliff is thickly covered; impenetrable fences of the very worst kind of thorn, hide the mouths of the caverns above mentioned, even from sight; there is no other communication with the houses either from above or below, but by narrow-winding sheep-paths, which through these thorns are very difficult to be discerned, for all are allowed to be overgrown with the utmost wildness, as a part of their defence; lofty and large trees (most of them of the thorny kind) tower high up above the edge of the cliff, and seem to be a fence against people falling down into the plain; these are all at their proper season covered with flowers of different sorts and colours, so are the bushes below on the face of the cliff: every thorn in Abyssinia indeed bears a beautiful flower; a small atonement for the evils they occasion.

From the edge of the cliff of Geesh above where the village is situated, the ground slopes with a very easy descent due north, and lands you at the edge of a triangular marsh above eighty six yards broad, in the line of the fountains, and two hundred

dred and eighty-six yards two feet from the edge of the cliff above the house of the priest of the river, where I resided: this triangle, supposing it a right one, will measure one hundred and ninety-six yards in its length, or in the perpendicular; I mean it did so on the 6th of November 1770; doubtless, like other marshes, in the middle of the dry season, and of the rains, it will vary its dimensions. I suppose that this perpendicular represents the north of the marsh, and immediately from the brink of it the ground rises in a rather steep bank, and forms a round hill not a hundred yards from the church to the middle fountain. On the east the ground descends likewise with a very easy tho' perceptible slope from the large village of Sacala, which gives its name to that territory; it is distant six miles from the source, but, to sight, seems scarcely to be two.

I shall suppose the sharp point of the triangle composed of the hypotenuse and the perpendicular, to point like the needle of a compass to Sacala, and the line of the hypotenuse to represent the south side of the marsh near the village Geesh. The base, or line, uniting the west end of the hypotenuse, and forming the right angle with the other side, I suppose to be the edge of the marsh formed by the bottom of the mountain of Geesh, and from this west side of it rises this high and beautiful mountain, quite detached from others, like a pyramid, which it resembles in its elegant

and regular form. It is about 4870 feet high measured in the slope; for near one half way the ascent is very easy and gradual. The base being of a remarkable breadth, it then becomes exceedingly steep, but all the way covered with good earth, producing fine grass and clover, interspersed with wild flowers.

Upon the rock in the middle of this plain, the Agows used to pile up the bones of the beasts killed in sacrifice, mixing them with billets of wood, after which they set them on fire. This is now discontinued, or rather transferred to another place near the church, as they are at present indulged in the full enjoyment of their idolatrous rites, both under Fasil and Michael.

In the middle of this marsh (that is about forty yards from each side of it) and something less from the bottom of the mountain of Geesh, arises a hillock of a circular form, about three feet from the surface of the marsh itself, though apparently founded much deeper in it. The diameter of this is something short of twelve feet, it is surrounded by a shallow trench, which collects the water and voids it eastward; it is firmly built with sod or earthen turf, brought from the sides, and constantly kept in repair, and this is the altar upon which all their religious ceremonies are performed. In the middle of this altar is a hole, obviously made, or at least enlarged by the hand of man. It is kept clear of grass, or other aquatic plants, and the water in it is perfectly pure and limpid,

limpid, but has no ebullition or motion of any kind discernible upon its surface. This mouth, or opening of the source, is some parts of an inch less than three feet diameter, and the water stood at that time the 5th of November, about two inches from the lip or brim, nor did it either increase or diminish during all the time of my stay at Geesh though we made plentiful use of it.

Upon putting down the shaft of my lance at six feet four inches, I found a very feeble resistance, as if from weak rushes or grass, and about six inches deeper I found my lance had entered into soft earth, but met with no stones or gravel; this was confirmed by another experiment, made on the 9th with a heavy plummet and line besmeared with soap, the bottom of which brought up at the above depth only black earth, such as the marsh itself and its sides are composed of.

Ten feet distant from the first of these springs, a little to the west of south, is the second fountain, above eleven inches in diameter, but this is eight feet, three inches deep. And about twenty feet distant from the first, to the S. S. W. is the third source, its mouth being something more than two feet large, and it is five feet eight inches deep. Both these last fountains stand in the middle of small altars, made, like the former, of firm sod, but neither of them above three feet diameter, and having a foot of less elevation than the first. The altar in this third source seemed almost dissolved by the water, which in both stood nearly up to the
brim;

brim; at the foot of each appeared a clear and brisk running rill; these uniting joined the water in the trench of the first altar, and then proceeded directly out, I suppose, at the point of the triangle, pointing eastward, in a quantity that would have filled a pipe of about two inches diameter.

The water from these fountains is very light and good, and perfectly tasteless; it was at this time most intensely cold, though exposed to the mid-day sun without shelter, there being no trees nor bushes nearer it than the cliff of Geesh on its south side, and the trees that surround Saint Michael Geesh on the north, which, according to the custom of Abyssinia, is, like other churches, planted in the midst of a grove.

On Monday the 5th of November, the day after my arrival at Geesh, the weather perfectly clear, cloudless, and nearly calm, in all respects well adapted to observation, being extremely anxious to ascertain, beyond the power of controversy, the precise spot on the globe that this fountain had so long occupied unknown, I pitched my tent on the north edge of the cliff, immediately above the priest's house, having verified the instrument with all the care possible, both at the zenith and horizon. With a brass quadrant of three feet radius, by one meridian altitude of the sun's upper limb, all necessary æquations and deductions considered, I determined the latitude of the place of observation to be $10^{\circ} 59' 11''$; and by another observation of the same kind made on the 6th, $10^{\circ} 59' 8''$; after

after which, by a medium of thirty-three observations of stars, the largest and nearest, the first vertical, I found the latitude to be $10^{\circ} 59' 10''$; a mean of which being $10^{\circ} 59' 9''$, say $10^{\circ} 59' 10''$; and if we should be so unnecessarily scrupulous as to add $15''$ for the measured distance the place of the tent was south of the altar, then we shall have $10^{\circ} 59' 25''$ in round numbers, though the Jesuits have supposed it, 12° N. by a random guess; but this being nearly the latitude of Condar, the capital from which they set out, shews plainly they knew not the precise latitude of either of these places.

On the 7th of November I was fortunate enough to be in time for the observation of an immersion of the first satellite of Jupiter, the last visible here before that planet's conjunction with the sun. My situation was very unfavourable, my view of the heavens being every way interrupted by a thick grove of bamboo canes, with high and shady trees growing upon the head of the precipice. Jupiter was low, and the prodigious mass of that beautiful mountain of Gêesh, bade fair to hide him before our business was done; I was therefore obliged to remove my telescope up to the edge of the cliff, after which, the weather being perfectly favourable, I had as fair and distinct a view of the planet as I could desire, and from that observation I did conclude unalterably the longitude of the chief fountain of the Nile to be $36^{\circ} 55' 30''$ east of the meridian of Greenwich.

The

The night of the 4th, that very night of my arrival, melancholy reflections upon my present state, the doubtfulness of my return in safety, were I permitted to make the attempt, and the fears that even this would be refused, according to the rule observed in Abyssinia with all travellers who have once entered the kingdom ; the consciousness of the pain that I was then occasioning to many worthy individuals, expecting daily that information concerning my situation which it was not in my power to give them ; some other thoughts, perhaps, still nearer the heart than those, crowded upon my mind, and forbade all approach of sleep.

I was, at that very moment, in possession of what had, for many years, been the principal object of my ambition and wishes : indifference, which from the usual infirmity of human nature follows, at least for a time, complete enjoyment, had taken place of it. The marsh, and the fountains, upon comparison with the rise of many of our rivers, became now a trifling object in my sight. I remembered that magnificent scene in my own native country, where the Tweed, Clyde, and Annan rise in one hill ; three rivers, as I now thought, not inferior to the Nile in beauty, preferable to it in the cultivation of those countries through which they flow ; superior, vastly superior to it in the virtues and qualities of the inhabitants, and in the beauty of its flocks ; crowding its pastures in peace, without fear of violence from
man

man or beast. I had seen the rise of the Rhine and Rhone, and the more magnificent sources of the Soane; I began, in my sorrow, to treat the inquiry about the source of the Nile as a violent effort of a distempered fancy:—

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her?—

Grief or despondency now rolling upon me like a torrent; relaxed, not refreshed, by unquiet and imperfect sleep, I started from my bed in the utmost agony; I went to the door of my tent; every thing was still; the Nile, at whose head I stood, was not capable either to promote or to interrupt my slumbers, but the coolness and serenity of the night braced my nerves, and chased away those phantoms that, while in bed, had oppressed and tormented me.

It was true, that numerous dangers, hardships, and sorrows had beset me through this half of my excursion; but it was still as true, that another Guide, more powerful than my own courage, health, or understanding, if any of these can be called man's own, had uniformly protected me in all that tedious half; I found my confidence not abated, that still the same Guide was able to conduct me to my now wished-for home: I immediately resumed my former fortitude, considered the Nile indeed as no more than rising from springs, as all other rivers do, but widely different in this,
that

that it was the palm for three thousand years held out to all the nations in the world as a *detur dignissimo*, which, in my cool hours, I had thought was worth the attempting at the risk of my life, which I had long either resolved to lose, or lay this discovery, a trophy in which I could have no competitor, for the honour of my country, at the feet of my sovereign, whose servant I was.

I had procured from the English ships, while at Jidda, some quick-silver, perfectly pure, and heavier than the common sort; warming therefore the tube gently at the fire, I filled it with this quick-silver, and, to my great surprise, found that it stood at the height of 22 English inches: suspecting that some air might have insinuated itself into the tube, I laid it by in a warm part of the tent, covered till morning, and returning to bed, slept there profoundly till six, when, satisfied the whole was in perfect order, I found it to stand at 22 English inches; neither did it vary sensibly from that height any of the following days I staid at Geesh; and thence I inferred, that, at the sources of the Nile, I was then more than two miles above the level of the sea; a prodigious height, to enjoy a sky perpetually clear, as also a hot sun never over-cast for a moment with clouds from rising to setting.

On the 6th of November, at a quarter past five in the morning, Fahrenheit's thermometer stood at 44°, at noon 96°, and at sun-set 46°. It was,

as

as to sense, cold at night, and still more so an hour before sun-rise.

The Nile, keeping nearly in the middle of the marsh, runs east for thirty yards, with a very little increase of stream, but perfectly visible, till met by the grassy brink of the land declining from Sacala. This turns it round gradually to the N. E. and then due north; and, in the two miles it flows in that direction, the river receives many small contributions from springs that rise in the banks on each side of it: there are two, particularly one on the hill at the back of St. Michael Geesh, the other a little lower than it on the other side, on the ground declining from Sacala. These last-mentioned springs are more than double its quantity; and being arrived under the hill whereon stands the church of Saint Michael Sacala, about two miles from its source, it there becomes a stream that would turn a common mill, shallow, clear, and running over a rocky bottom about three yards wide: this must be understood to be variable according to the season; and the present observations are applicable to the 5th of November, when the rains had ceased for several weeks. There is the ford which we passed going to Geesh, and we crossed it the day of our arrival, in the time of my conversation with Woldo about the fath.

Nothing can be more beautiful than this spot; the small rising hills about us were all thick-covered with verdure, especially with clover, the
largest

largest and finest I ever saw; the tops of the heights crowned with trees of a prodigious size; stream, at the banks of which we were sitting, was limpid and pure as the finest crystal; the ford, covered thick with a bushy kind of tree that seemed to affect to grow to no height, but thick with foliage and young branches, rather to court the surface of the water, whilst it bore, in prodigious quantities, a beautiful yellow flower, not unlike a single wild rose of that colour, but without thorns; and, indeed, upon examination, we found that it was not a species of the rose, but of *hypericum*.

From the source to this beautiful ford, below the church of St. Michael Geesh, I enjoyed my second victory over this coy river, after the first obtained at the fountains themselves. What might still be said of the world in general no longer applied to me:—

————— *Nec contigit ulli*
Hoc vidisse caput;
 And again,
Nec licuit populis parvum te, Nile, videre.

Here, at the ford, after having stepped over it fifty times, I observed it no larger than a common mill stream. The Nile, from this ford, turns to the westward, and, after running over loose stones occasionally, in that direction, about four miles farther, the angle of inclination increasing greatly,
 broken

broken water, and a fall commences of about six feet, and thus it gets rid of the mountainous place of its nativity, and issues into the plain of Goutto, where is its first cataract; for, as I have said before, I don't account the broken water, or little falls, cataracts, which are not at all visible in the height of the rains.

Arrived in the plain of Goutto, the river seems to have lost all its violence, and scarcely is seen to flow, but, at the same time, it there makes so many sharp, unnatural windings, that it differs from any other river I ever saw, making above twenty sharp angular peninsulas in the course of five miles, thro' a bare, marshy plain of clay, quite destitute of trees, and exceedingly inconvenient and unpleasant to travel. After passing this plain, it turns due north, receives the tribute of many small streams, the Gometti, the Googueri, and the Kebezza, which descend from the mountains of Aformasha; and, united, fall into the Nile about twenty miles below its source; it begins here to run rapidly, and again receives a number of beautiful rivulets, which have their rise in the heights of Litchambara, the semi circular range of mountains that pass behind, and seem to inclose Aformasha: These are the Caccino, the Carnachiuli, the Googueri, the Iworra, the Jeddeli, and the Minch, all which, running into the Davola, join the Nile something less than a mile west of the church of Abbo.

It

It is now become a considerable stream ; its banks high and broken, covered with old timber trees for the space of about three miles ; it inclines to the north-east, and winds exceedingly, and is then joined by the small river Diwa from the east. It then makes a semi circle, and receives Dee-oh-ha, turns sharply to the east, and falls down its second cataract at Kerr. About three miles below this cataract, the large, pleasant, and limpid Jemma pays its tribute to the Nile. Though its course is now mostly north, through Maitsha on the east, and Arooffi and Sankraber on the west, it is still inclining towards the lake Tzana, and, after receiving the rivers Boha and Amlac Ohha, small streams from the west, and the Affar, Arooffi, and Kelti, large rivers from the east, it crosses the south end of the lake Tzana for about seven leagues, preserving the colour of its stream distinct from that of the lake, till it issues out at the west side of it in the territory of Dara, where there is a ford, though very deep and dangerous, immediately where it first resumes the appearance of a river.

The deep stream is here exceedingly rapid ; the banks in the course of a few miles become very high, and are covered with a verdure, abundant and varied beyond all description : passing afterwards below Dara, it bounds that narrow stripe of flat country which is called Foggora, confined between the lake and the mountains of Begemder, till it arrives at its third cataract of Alata, a small village of Mahometans, on the east side of the
river,

river, and there exhibits a scene that requires more fancy, and the description of a more poetical pen than mine, although the impression the sight of it made upon me will certainly never be removed but with life.

The course of the river is now S. E. in that direction it washes the western part of Begemder and Amhara on the right; the river then incloses the province of Gojam, so that, in the circle that it makes in returning towards its source, that province remains always on the right.

From both sides, the Nile receives a number of tributary streams, the Muga, Gammala, Abea, Aswari, and Mashillo, from the mountains of Gojam; and the Bashilo, Boha, and Geeshem from those of Begemder and Amhara; it then passes below Walaka. The river now has a course near the southward, passing Upper and Lower Shoa. From these countries, on the east of the Nile, come the great rivers Samba, Jemma, Roma, with some others, and the Temsi, Gult, and Tzul from the high country of the Agows, and Amid Amid to the northward. From Shoa the Nile winds to the S. W. to the W. N. W. nearly inclosing all the south of Gojam. Immediately adjoining it, turning still more northerly, is the province of Bizamo, bordering on the river Yabous, which, coming from the southward, and terminating this province, falls into the Nile.

The Nile, now turned almost due north, approaches its source so as to be distant from it only
about

about 62 miles ; it is here very deep and rapid, and is only fordable at certain seasons of the year. The Galla, however, when they invade Abyssinia, cross it at all times without difficulty, either by swimming, or on goats skins blown up like bladders : other means of passing are in small rafts, placed upon two skins filled with wind ; or, twisting their hands round the horse's tail, they are drawn over by them ; this last is the way that the women, who follow the armies of Abyssinia, cross unfordable rivers, a case that always occurs in late campaigns. Crocodiles abound exceedingly in this part of the Nile ; but the people, who live on the banks of the river, have or pretend to have charms which defend them from the most voracious of these animals.

Adjoining the Gongas, and bounding them on the north, arises a vast chain of very high mountains ; the south side of this is inhabited by tribes of Gongas and others, but on the north-east side, nearest Abyssinia, is a nation of perfect blacks, called Guba. The Nile seems to have forced its way through a gap in this prodigious barrier, and falls down a cataract of about 280 feet. This is immediately followed by two others in the same ridge of mountains, both very considerable, if not compared with the first. This high ridge runs west far into the continent of Africa, where it is called Dyre and Tegla ; the east end (that is east of the Nile) joins the mountainous country of Kuara, and is there called the Mountains of Fazuclo.

These

These mountains, as far as I could learn, are all very fully inhabited throughout by many powerful clans, or nations, mostly Pagans. It is, however, a country the least known of any in Africa, but a very large quantity of gold is brought from thence, as well as many slaves; the gold is washed down by the torrents in the time of the tropical rains, and, upon these ceasing, they search after that metal found in small pellets entangled among roots, branches, tufts of grass, hollows, or in any thing that can imprison and detain it. This is the fine gold of Sennaar, called Tibbar.

The Nile now runs close by Sennaar, in a direction nearly north and south; it then turns sharply towards the east, is brim-full and vastly pleasant in the fair season, being indeed the only ornament of this bare and flat, though cultivated country. From Sennaar it passes many large towns inhabited by Arabs, all of them white people. The Nile then passes Gerri, and runs N. E. to join the Tacazzè, passing in its way a large and populous town called Chendi, probably the ancient metropolis of *Candace* *.

If we are not to reject entirely the authority of ancient history, the island of Meroë, so famous in the first ages, must be found somewhere between the source of the Nile and this point, where the two rivers unite; for of the Nile we are certain,

* Called in the Ethiopic annals *Hendaqué*; wrote originally, I suppose, with an *X* or *Ch*.

and it seems very clear that the Atbara is the Ataboras of the ancients. Pliny * says, it is the stream which incloses the left side of Meroë as the Nile does the right; and we must consider him to be looking southward from Alexandria, when he uses the otherwise equivocal terms of right and left, and, after this junction of these two rivers, the Nile receives or unites itself with no other till it falls into the sea at Alexandria.

Much inquiry has been made about this island, once a most distinguished spot on our globe, the cradle of science and philosophy, which spread itself from this to enlighten other nations, we are now full of uncertainty, searching in a desert for the place of its existence; such is the miserable instability of all human excellence. Nothing but confusion has followed this inquiry, because they who were engaged in it rather substituted vain systematical prejudices of their own, than set themselves to consider those lights which were immediately before them.

The Jesuits, and a French writer, who is a constant champion of their errors, have fixed the peninsula of Gojam to be the Meroë of the ancients. M. le Grande (the compiler alluded to) having in vain endeavoured to answer the objections against Gojam being Meroë, at last declares, in a kind of literary passion, that the ancients have spoken so differently about Meroë, that Gojam is as likely to be the place as any other.

* Lib. v. cap. 9. Nat. Hist.

I have a proper esteem for the merit of M. le Grande, where he forms his conjectures from his own opinion, and I have also a due deference to that learned Order the Jesuits ; it is to their labours, that learning in general, and geography in particular, has been more indebted than to those of any other set of men whatever. Yet still I can never believe, either that Gojam is Meroë, or that there is any difficulty in finding its true situation, or that the ancients have written confusedly about it. On the contrary, I find it described by its latitude, its distance from places known, the produce of its soil, colour of its inhabitants, and several other circumstances which peculiarly belong to it, with greater accuracy and precision than many other disputed situations.

I shall begin by giving my reasons why Gojam is not Meroë : and, first, Diodorus * tells us, this island had its name from a sister of Cambyfes, king of Persia, who died there in the expedition that prince had undertaken against Ethiopia. Now, Cambyfes's army perished in the desert immediately to the southward, after he had passed Meroë, consequently he never was in Gojam, nor within 200 miles of it ; his mother, therefore, could not have died there, nor would his army have perished with hunger if he had arrived in Gojam, or near it, for he would then have been in one of the most plentiful countries in the world.

* Diod. Sicul. Bibliothec. lib. i. p. 20.

The next reason to prove that Gojam is not Meroë, is, that that island was inclosed between the Astaboras and the Nile, but Gojam is surrounded entirely by the Nile; there is no other river than it that can, or ever did, pass for the Astaboras, whose situation was distant, and which, retaining its ancient name, cannot be mistaken, for it is at this day called Atbara. Again, as the ancients knew Meroë, if Gojam had been Meroë, they must have known the fountains of the Nile; and this we are sure they did not.

On the other hand, Pliny says, Meroë, the most considerable of all the islands of the Nile, is called Astaboras, from the name of its left channel—*“ Circa clarissimam earum Meroën, Astabores lævo
“ alveo dictus ; * ”* which cannot describe any other place than the confluence of those two rivers, the Nile and Atbara. The same author says farther, that the sun is vertical twice a year, once when proceeding northward he enters into the 18th degree, Taurus, and after returning southward into the 14th degree of the Lion.—Lucan says the same :—

————— *Latè tibi gurgite rupto
Ambitur nigris Meroë fecunda colonis,
Læta comis hebeni ; quæ quamvis arbore multâ
Frondeat, æstatem nullâ sibi mitigat umbrâ :
Linea tam rectum mundi ferit illa Leonem.*

Now Gojam, being in lat. 10°, could never answer this description.

* Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. v. cap. 9.

But there are in these lines two circumstances which are peculiar to the peninsula of Atbara, or Meroë, and described as such by the poet. The first is, the inhabitants of Meroë were black, such were the Gymnosophists, the first philosophers and inhabitants of this island, and such they have ever been down to the Saracen conquest. On the other hand, nobody will pretend to say that the people of Gojam are black; they are long-haired, and of as fair a complexion as other Abyssinians; nor was it ever supposed that they had philosophers or science among them before the Jesuits arrived in the country.

The next circumstance, peculiar to Meroë, is, that the ebony-tree grew there, which is spread all over the peninsula of Atbara, and out of it this tree is not found, (as far as I know) unless a few trees in the province of Kuara, in the low and northernmost part of it; a country, for its intolerable heat, not inferior to that of Atbara, and contiguous to it; but in Gojam, a country deluged with six months rain, this tree would not grow; though so much farther south it is near two English miles higher than Atbara, and is therefore too cold. Such are my reasons for believing that Gojam cannot be Meroë. In my return through the desert I shall confirm this, by proving that Atbara is Meroë, and that we are to look for it about lat. $16^{\circ} 29'$, near the end of the tropical rains.

The

The Nile, now united with the Aftaboras, takes its course straight north for more than two degrees of the meridian ; it then makes a very unexpected turn W. by S. considerably more than that space in longitude, winding very little till it arrives at Korti, the first town in the Barabra, or kingdom of Dongola. The river by this time, with three sides, inclosed the great deserts of Bahiouda the road through this from Dereira to Korti (before it was cut off by the Arabs, as it now continues to be) made the fourth side of the square which bound this desert ; by this route it was that Poncet and the unfortunate M. du Roule went to Abyssinia.

From Korti the Nile runs almost S. W. where it passes Dongola, a country of the Shepherds, called also Beja, the capital of Barabra, and comes to Moscho, a considerable town, and welcome place of refreshment to the weary traveller, when the caravans were suffered to pass from Egypt into Ethiopia, who, after traversing the dreary desert of Selima for near 500 miles, found himself at Moscho, in repose, in the enjoyment of plenty of fresh water, long ago become to him an indulgence more delicious than ever he had before conceived. From Moscho the Nile turns gradually to the N. E. and in lat. $22^{\circ} 15'$ it meets with a chain of mountains, and throws itself over them down a cataract called Jan Adel, which is its seventh cataract ; and, continuing still N. E. it passes Ibrim and Deir, two small garrisons belonging

longing to Egypt. The fall of the Nile in the country of Kennoufs, which forms the 8th cataract, and its course through Egypt, are already described in my voyage up the river.

C H A P. XVI.

Various Names of this river---Ancient Opinion concerning the Cause of its Inundation---Real Manner by which it is effected---Remarkable Disposition of the Peninsula of Africa.

IT is not to be wondered, that, in the long course the Nile makes from its source to the sea, it should have acquired a different name in every territory, where a different language was spoken ; but there is one thing remarkable, that though the name in sound and in letters is really different, yet the signification is the same, and has an obvious reference to the dog-star.

Among the Agows, a barbarous and idolatrous nation, it is called Gzeir, Geefa *, Seir ; the first of these names signifying *God* : it is also called Abba, or Ab, *Father* ; and by many other terms which I cannot write in the language of that nation,

* From a nation of Shangalla of that name, through which it runs, after having passed its source, and taken its course into Nubia.

whilst,

whilst, with a fervent and unfeigned devotion, under these, or such-like appellations, they pray to the Nile, or spirit residing in that river. The next name it receives is, when descended into Gogjam, where it is called Abay. Foreigners, of all denominations, not acquainted with the language of the country, have, from hearing it was stiled *Ab, Father*, by the Agows, or Abai, imagined its name Abawi, a case of that noun, which, in their ignorance, they have made to signify, the Father.

Ludolf, the only one in the age he lived that had any real knowledge of either the Geez or Amharic, was the first to perceive this : he found in neither of these languages Abawi could be a nominative, and consequently could not be applied to any thing ; and next he as truly found it could not be of the singular number, and, if so, could not signify one river. He stopped, however, as it were, in the very brink of discovery, for he knew there was no writing or letters in Amharic, which were therefore necessarily borrowed from the old and written language Geez, so that all that could be done was, first, attentively to hear the pronunciation of the word in Amharic, and then to write it in Geez characters as nearly conformable to the sound as possible. Now, the name of the river in Amharic is Abay, pronouncing the y open, or like two (i), and the sense of that word so wrote in Geez, as well as Amharic, is, “ the river that suddenly swells, or overflows,
periodi-

periodically with rain ;” than which a more appropriate name could never have been invented.

By the Gongas, on the south of the mountains Dyre and Tegla, who are indigenæ, the river is called Dahli, and on the north of these mountains, where the great cataracts are by the Guba, Nuba, and Shangalla, it is stiled Kowafs, both which names signify *a watching dog*, the latrator anubis, or, the *dog-star*. In the plain country, between Fazuclo and Sennaar, it is called Nil, which signifies *blue* ; and the Arabs interpret it by the word Azergue, which it keeps as far as Halfaia, or near it, where it joins the White River.

The next name by which the Nile went was Siris ; Pliny tells us it was called Siris both before and after it came into Beja. “ *Nec ante Nilus, quam se totum aquis concordibus rursus junxit. Sic quoque etiamnum Siris, ut ante nominatus per aliquot millia, et in totum Homero Egyptus, aliisque Triton*.*” This name the Greeks thought was given to it, because of its black colour during the inundation, which mistake presently produced confusion ; and we find, according to this idea, the compiler of the Old Testament, (I should suppose Esdras, after the captivity) has translated Siris, *the black river*, by the Hebrew, Shihor, but nobody ever saw the Nile black when it overflowed ; and it would be a very strong figure to call it so in Egypt, where it is always white during the

* Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. v. cap. 9.

whole of the inundation. Had Esdras, or whoever it was that followed the Greek interpretation of Siris, viz. *black*, inquired in Beja what was the origin of this name, they would have there learned it imported the River of the Dog-star, on whose vertical appearance this Nile, or Siris, overflows; and this idolatrous worship, paid to the Nile, was probably part of the reason of the question the prophet Jeremiah asks *, “And what hast thou to do in Egypt, to drink the water of Seir? or the water profaned by idolatrous rites?”

As for the first, it is only the translation of the word Bahar, applied to the Nile. The inhabitants of the Barabra, to this day, call it Bahar el Nil, or, *the Sea of the Nile*, in contradistinction to the Red Sea, which they know by no other name but Bahar el Melech, the *Salt Sea*. The junction of the three great rivers; the Nile, flowing on the west of Meroë; the Tacazzé, which washes the east side, and joins the Nile at Maggiran, in lat. 17°; and the Mareb, which falls into this last, something above this junction—gives the name of Triton to the Nile.

More doubt has been raised as to the third name, *Ægyptus*, which it obtains in Homer, and which, I apprehend, was a very ancient name given it even in Ethiopia. The generality, nay, all interpreters, I may say, imagine, as in that of Siris, that this name was given it in relation to its co-

* Jerem. chap. ii. ver. xviii.

lour, viz. *black*; but with this I cannot agree; Egypt, in the Ethiopic, is called *y Gyp*t, Agar; and, an inhabitant of the country, *Gyp*t, for precisely so it is pronounced, which means the country of ditches, or canals, drawn from the Nile on both sides at right angles with the river; nothing, surely, is more obvious than to write *y Gipt*, so pronouncing Egypt, and, with its termination, *us*, or *os*, Egyptus. The Nile is also called *Kronides*, Jupiter; as also several other names; but these are rather the epithets of poets, relative and transitory, not the permanent appellation of the river.

I would pass over another name, that of Geon, which some of the fathers of the church have fondly given it, pretending it was one of the rivers that came from the terrestrial paradise, and encompassed the whole land of Cush, whilst, for this purpose, they bring it two thousand miles by a series of miracles, as it were, under the earth and under the sea: To do what? to surround the whole land of Cush. And does it surround it, or does it surround any land whatever? This, and some similar wonders told by St. Augustine, have been eagerly caught at, and quoted by unbelieving sceptics; meaning to insinuate, that no better, in other respects, was the authority of these fathers when they explain and defend the truths of Christianity. For my own part, though perfectly a friend to free and temperate inquiry, these injudicious arguments which I need not quote, have little weight with

with me. St. Augustine, when explaining those truths, was undoubtedly under the direction of that spirit which could not lie, and was promised to the priesthood while occupied in their master's commission the propagation of Christian knowledge; but when, from vanity and human frailty, he attempted to establish things he had nothing to do with, speaking no longer by commandment, he reasoned like a mere man, misled by vanity and too great confidence in his own understanding.

We come now to investigate the reason of the inundation of the Nile, which, being once explained, I cannot help thinking that all further inquiries concerning this subject are superfluous.

It is an observation that holds good through all the works of Providence, That although God, in the beginning, gave an instance of his almighty power, by creating the world with one single *fiat*, yet, in the laws he has laid down for the maintaining order and regularity in the details of his creation, he has invariably produced all these effects by the least degree of power possible, and by those means that seem most obvious to human conception. But it seemed, however, not according to the tenor of his ways and wisdom, to create a country like Egypt, without springs, or even dews, and subject it to a nearly vertical sun, that he might save it by so extraordinary an intervention as was the annual inundation, and make it the most fertile spot of the universe.

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This violent effort seemed to be too great, above all proportion, for the end for which it was intended, and the cause was therefore thought to merit the application of the sublimest philosophy; and accordingly, as Diodorus Siculus * tells us, it became the study of the most learned men of the first ages, the principal of whom, with their opinions, he quotes, and at the same time alledges the reason why they were not universally received. The first is Thales of Miletum, one of the seven sages, who assigns for the cause the Etesian winds, which blowing, all the hot season, from the Mediterranean, in contrary direction to the stream of the river, force the Nile to accumulate, by obstructing the flowing to the sea, occasion it to rise above its banks, and consequently to overflow the country.

But to this it was answered, That, were this the case, all rivers running in a northern direction, to the sea, would be subject to the same accident; and this it was known they were not. And we may further add, that were this really the cause, the inundation of the Nile would be very irregular; for the winds at this season often blow from the south-west for two or three days together, and then the inundation would be interrupted. To this it must be added, that a very considerable part of Egypt, and that the most fertile, the Delta, is under the dominion of variable winds, which last long, from one point, at no time.

* Diod. Sic. lib. i.

I shall trespass upon my reader's patience, on this head, by no more than one additional observation. If the Etesian winds, by opposing the stream, occasioned the inundation, they could effect this no longer than they continued to blow. Now, it was an observation we made when on the Nile, and it was almost without exception, that as often as the Etesian winds blew throughout the day, the night was either calm, or the wind blew gently from the south or east, so that it is morally impossible the river could have overflowed at all, without a much more powerful and constant agent than the Etesian winds :—

——— *Zephyros quoque vana vetustas*
His adscriptis aquis, ———

LUCAN.

Vain, indeed ! A philosopher of the present age would be thought mad who should rely on a system so contrary to experiment and observation ; tho' Thales, the propagator of this now mentioned, was so highly esteemed for his knowledge.

The next opinion quoted is that of Anaxagoras, who attributes the inundation of the Nile to snow melting in Ethiopia ; and this Diodorus contradicts, for a very substantial reason, that there is no snow in Ethiopia to melt. But supposing all the mountainous part of Ethiopia north of the Line, that is all Abyssinia, were covered with snow, when the inundation must happen in other months,

months, as it must begin in January, for the sun being then within a few degrees of being vertical, it must have been the very height of flood when the sun passed over that country in April; whereas its increase is not discerned till about June, when the sun has left the zenith of all Abyssinia, having then passed over Nubia, and is standing vertical to Syene, or as far to the northward as it can proceed.

It is not my meaning to maintain that there never was snow in Abyssinia, as climates have wonderfully changed. In Cæsar's time, the greatest rivers in Gaul almost every year were frozen over for months, so that armed nations, with their families, cattle, and incumbrances, passed regularly over them upon the ice without fear; an event that happens not now once in a century. In Prussia * also were found white bears, an animal now confined to the severest snowy regions of the north; and, what comes still nearer to the present subject, in the inscription found in Abyssinia by Cosmas Indoplaustes, Ptolomæus Evergetes, speaking there, in the first person, of his own conquests in Ethiopia, says, that he had passed the river Siris, and had entered the kingdom of Samen, a country intolerable on account of cold and deep snow.

This account I think almost incredible. Ptolemy parted from Egypt, his fleet coasting along the Red Sea, opposite to his army, and carrying

* Pausanias Arcad. chap. xvii.

provisions for it; we know, moreover, the time his ships failed, the beginning of June, when the Nile was overflowed, and consequently of great utility to his army on the first part of his expedition, while he was in Egypt and part of Nubia. Now supposing him to pass the desert as quickly as possible, and come to Axum, it must have been then Summer, or near it; and as it was necessary his fleet should return by the monsoon in October, so it must have then rained continually, and the sun been perpendicular to the country when he found the deep snows in Samen, which is not very probable. The river Tacazzé, moreover, which Ptolemy crossed, was really not passable at that time, and no Abyssinian army did ever attempt it during a flood, though, without scruple at all seasons they cross the Nile when most deep and rapid.

I remember that when I first ascended Lama!mon, the highest mountain of that ridge, running the whole length of the province of Samen, it was in the depth of winter; the thermometer stood at 32° , wind N. W. clear and cold, but attended with only hoar frost, though at that height, and at that season; the grass scarcely was discoloured, and only felt crisp below my feet, with this small degree of freezing; but this vanished into dew after a quarter of an hour's sun, nor did I ever see any sign of congelation upon the water, however shaded and stagnant, upon the top of that, or any other hill. I have seen hail indeed lie for three

hours in the forenoon upon the mountains of Amid Amid.

The opinion of Democritus was, that the overflowing of the Nile was owing to the sun's attraction of snowy vapour from the frozen mountains of the north, which being carried by the wind southward, and thawed by warmer climates, fell down upon Ethiopia in deluges of rain: and the same is advanced by Agatharcides of Cnidus in his *Periplus of the Red Sea*. This opinion of Democritus, Diodorus attempts to refute, but we shall not join him in his refutation, because we are now perfectly certain, from observation, that Democritus and Agatharcides both of them had fallen upon the true causes of the inundation.

I shall now mention a treatise of a modern philosopher, wrote expressly upon this subject, I mean a discourse on the causes of the inundation of the Nile, by M. de la Chambre, printed at Paris in quarto, 1665, where, in a long dedication, he modestly assures the king, he is persuaded that his majesty will consider, as one of the glories of his reign, the discovery of the true cause of the Nile's inundation, which he had then made, after it had baffled the inquiry of all philosophers for the space of 2000 years; and, indeed, the cause and the discovery would have been both very remarkable, had they been attended with the least degree of possibility. M. de la Chambre says, that the nitre with which the ground in Egypt is impregnated, ferments like a kind of paste, occasioning the

the Nile to ferment likewise, and thus increases the mass of water so much, that it spreads over the whole land of Egypt.

Far be it from me to bear hard upon those attempts with which the ancients endeavoured to solve those phenomena, when, for want of a sufficient progress in experimental philosophy and observation, they were generally destitute of the proper means; but there is no excuse for a man's either believing or writing, that earth, impregnated with so small a quantity of any mixture as not to be discernible to the eye, smell, or taste, could periodically swell the waters of a river, then almost dry, to such an immensity, as to cover the whole plains of Egypt, and discharge millions of tons every day into the sea, at the same time that it contributed to the health of the people and the fertility of the land. It puts me in mind of an assertion of M. de Maillet, almost as absurd as de la Chambre's treatise, that the Nile, which in Egypt is the only fountain of pleasure, of health, and plenty, has a mixture of one tenth of mud during the time of the inundation: pleasant and wholesome stream, truly, to which Fleetditch would be Hippocrene.

But whatever were the conjectures of the dreamers of antiquity, modern travellers and philosophers, describing without system or prejudice what their eyes saw have found that the inundation of Egypt has been effected by natural means, perfectly consonant with the ordinary rules of Pro-

vidence, and the laws given for the government of the rest of the universe. They have found that the plentiful fall of the tropical rains produced every year at the same time, by the action of a violent sun, has been uniformly, without miracle, the cause of Egypt being regularly overflowed.

The sun being nearly stationary for some days in the tropic of Capricorn, the air there becomes so much rarified, that the heavier winds, charged with watery particles, rush in upon it from the Atlantic on the west, and from the Indian Ocean on the east. The south wind, moreover, loaded with heavy vapour, condensed in that high ridge of mountains not far south of the Line, which forms a spine to the peninsula of Africa, and, running northward with the other two, furnish wherewithal to restore the equilibrium.

The sun, having thus gathered such a quantity of vapours as it were to a focus, now puts them in motion, and drawing them after it in its rapid progress northward, on the 7th of January, for two years together, seemed to have extended its power to the atmosphere of Gondar, when, for the first time, there appeared in the sky white, dappled, thin clouds, the sun being then distant 34° from the zenith, without any one cloudy or dark speck having been seen for several months before. Advancing to the Line with increased velocity, and describing larger spirals, the sun brings on a few drops of rain at Gondar the 1st of March, being then distant 5° from the zenith; these

these are greedily absorbed by the thirsty soil, and this seems to be the farthest extent of the sun's influence, capable of causing rain, which then only falls in large drops, and lasts but a few minutes: the rainy season, however, begins most seriously upon its arrival at the zenith of every place, and these rains continue constant and increasing after he has passed it, in his progress northward. Before this, green boughs and leaves appear floating in the Bahar el Abiad, and shew that, in the latitude where it rises, the rains are already abundant. The Galla, who inhabit, or have passed that river, give account of its situation, which lies, as far as I could ever calculate, about 5° from the Line.

In April, all the rivers in Amhara, Begemder, and Lasta, first discoloured, and then beginning to swell, join the Nile in the several parts of its course nearest them; the river then, from the height of its angle of inclination, forces itself thro' the stagnant lake without mixing with it. In the beginning of May, hundreds of streams pour themselves from Gojam, Damot, Maitsha, and Dembea, into the lake Tzana, which had become low by intense evaporation, but now begins to fill insensibly, and contributes a large quantity of water to the Nile, before it falls down the cataract of Alata. In the beginning of June, the sun having now passed all Abyssinia, the rivers there are all full, and then is the time of the greatest rains in Abyssinia, while it is for some days, as it were, stationary in the tropic of Cancer.

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These rains are collected by the four great rivers in Abyssinia; the Mareb, the Bowiha, Tacazzé, and the Nile. All these principal, and their tributary streams, would, however, be absorbed, nor be able to pass the burning deserts, or find their way into Egypt, were it not for the White river, which, rising in a country of almost perpetual rain, joins to it a never-failing stream, equal to the Nile itself.

In the first days of May, the sun, in his way to the northern tropic, is vertical over the small village of Gerri, the limit of the tropical rains. Not all the influence of the sun, which has already past its zenith, and for many days has been as it were stationary within a few degrees of it over Syene, in the tropic of Cancer, can bring them one inch farther to the northward, neither do any dews fall there as might be reasonably expected from the quantity of fresh and exhalable water that is then running in the Nile, though it passes close by that village, and after, through that wild and dreary desert. The fact is certain, and surely curious; the cause perhaps unknown, although it may be guessed at.

I conceive, that mountains are necessary to occasion either rain or dew, by arresting and stopping the great quantity of vapour which is here driven southward before the Etesian winds. Now, all that country between Gerri and Syene is flat and desert, so that this interruption is wanting; and it is owing to the same cause, that the bounds of the
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the tropical rains do stop farther to the southward as you travel westward, and in place of lat 16° , which in their limits at Gerri, they are confined within lat. 14° in that part of the kingdom of Sennaar, which lies south and west of that capital, where all is free from mountains till you come to those of Kuara and Fazuclo.

Yet although the sun's influence when at its greatest, is not strong enough to draw the boundaries of the summer's rain farther north than Gerri, all the time that it is in the tropic of Cancer at its greatest distance, these rains are then at their heaviest throughout all Abyssinia; and Egypt, and all its labours, would soon be swept into the Mediterranean did not the sun now begin to change its sphere of action by hastening its progress southward.

From Syene the sun passes over the desert, and arrives at Gerri; here he reverses the effects his influence had when on his passage northward; for whereas, in his whole course of declination northward, from the Line to Gerri, he brought on the rains at every place where he became vertical, so now he cuts off those rains the instant he returns to the zenith of each of those places passing over Abyssinia in his journey southward, till arrived at the Line, in the autumnal equinox, his influence ceases on the side of Abyssinia, and goes to extend itself to the southern hemisphere. And so precisely is this stupendous operation calculated, that, on the 25th of September, only three days after
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the equinox, the Nile is generally found at Cairo to be at its highest; and begins to diminish every day after.

Thus far as to the cause and progress of the Nile's inundation in our northern hemisphere; but so much light and confirmation is to be drawn from our consideration of the remainder of the sun's journey southward, that I am persuaded my following him thither will require no apology to my philosophic or inquisitive reader.

Immediately after the sun has passed the Line he begins the rainy season to the southward, still as he approaches the zenith of each place; but the situation and necessities of this country being varied, the manner of promoting the inundation is changed. A high chain of mountains run from about 6° south all along the middle of the continent towards the Cape of Good Hope, and intersects the southern part of the peninsula nearly in the same manner that the river Nile does the northern. A strong wind from the south, stopping the progress of the condensed vapours, dashes them against the cold summits of this ridge of mountains, and forms many rivers which escape in the direction either east or west, as the level presents itself. If this is towards the west, they fall down the sides of the mountains into the Atlantic, and if on the east, into the Indian Ocean. Now all these would be useless to man, were the Etesian winds to reign, as one would think must be the case, analogous to what passes in Egypt; nay, if
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any one wind prevailed, these rivers, swelled with rains, would not be navigable, but another wise and providential disposition has remedied this.

The clouds, drawn by the violent action of the sun, are condensed, then broken, and fall as rain on the top of this high ridge, and swell every river, while a wind from the ocean on the east blows like a monsoon up each of these streams in a direction contrary to their current, during the whole time of the inundation, and this enables boats to ascend into the western parts of Sofala, and the interior country to the mountains, where lies the gold. The same effect, from the same cause, is produced on the western side towards the Atlantic; the high ridge of mountains being placed between the different countries west and east, is at once the source of their riches, and of those rivers which conduct to the treasures which would be otherwise inaccessible in the eastern parts of the kingdoms of Benin, Congo, and Angola.

There are three remarkable appearances attending the inundation of the Nile; every morning in Abyssinia is clear, and the sun shines. About nine, a small cloud, not above four feet broad, appears in the east, whirling violently round as if upon an axis, but, arrived near the zenith, it first abates its motion, then loses its form, and extends itself greatly, and seems to call up vapours from all opposite quarters. These clouds having attained nearly the same height, rush against each other with great violence, and
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put me always in mind of Elisha foretelling rain on Mount Carmel *. The air, impelled before the heaviest mass, or swiftest mover, makes an impression of its own form in the collection of clouds opposite, and the moment it has taken possession of the space made to receive it, the most violent thunder possible to be conceived instantly follows, with rain; after some hours, the sky again clears, with a wind at north, and it is always disagreeably cold when the thermometer is below 63° .

The second thing remarkable is the variation of the thermometer; when the sun is in the southern tropic, 36° distant from the zenith of Gondar, it is seldom lower than 72° ; but it falls to 60° and 59° when the sun is immediately vertical; so happily does the approach of rain compensate the heat of a too-scorching sun.

The third is, that remarkable stop in the extent of the rains northward, when the sun, that has conducted the vapours from the Line, and should seem, now more than ever, to be in possession of them, is here over-ruled suddenly, till, on its return to the zenith of Gerri, again it resumes the absolute command over the rain, and reconducts it to the Line to furnish distant deluges to the southward.

I cannot omit observing here the particular disposition of this peninsula of Africa; supposing a

* 1 Kings, chap. xviii. ver. 43.

meridian line, drawn through the Cape of Good Hope, till it meets the Mediterranean where it bounds Egypt, and that this meridian has a portion of latitude that will comprehend all Abyffinia, Nubia, and Egypt below it, this section of the continent, from south to north, contains 64° divided equally by the equator, so that, from the Line to the southmost point of Africa, is 32° ; and northward, to the edge of the Mediterranean, is 32° also: now, if on each side we set off 2° , these are the limits of the variable winds, and we have then 30° south, and 30° north, within which space, on both sides, the trade-winds are confined; set off again 16° from the 32° , that is, half the distance between the Cape of Good Hope and the Line, and 16° between the Line and the Mediterranean, and you have the limits of the tropical rains, 16° on each side of the equator: again, take half of 16° , which is 8° , and add it to the limit of the tropical rains, that is to 16° , and you have 24° , which is the situation of the tropics.—There is something very remarkable in this disposition.

C H A P. XVI.

Egypt not the Gift of the Nile---Ancient Opinion refuted---Modern Opinion contrary to Proof and Experience.

IT is here we shall discuss a question often agitated, whether Egypt owed its existence to the Nile, and whether it was formerly an arm of the sea, but in process of time, being filled up by the quantity of mud which the Nile deposited in its inundation, it at length became firm land, above the surface of the waters? I believe this is the general opinion, as well of the books, as of the greatest part of travellers of the present age; it therefore merits examination, whether it is founded in fact and observation, or whether it is to be ranked among the old and ill-supported traditions fancifully now again brought into fashion.

Egypt is a valley bounded on the right and left by very rugged mountains; it must, therefore, occur to any one that the Nile, being a torrent falling from very high ground in Ethiopia, were
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this valley concave, the violent rapidity, or motion, would be much likelier to carry away mud and soil, than to leave it behind in a state to accumulate.

The land of Egypt slopes gently from the middle of the valley to the foot of the mountains on each side, so that the center is really the highest part of the valley, and in the middle of this runs the Nile*. At right angles with the stream large trenches are cut to the foot of the mountains, in which canals the water enters, and insensibly flows down to the end of these trenches, where it diffuses itself over the level ground.

As the river swells, these canals fill with water, which goes seeking a level to the foot of the mountains; so that now the flood, which begins to re stagnate towards the bank of the river, acquires no motion, as the calishes are formed at right angles to the stream. Sometimes, indeed, the river is so high, when the rains in Ethiopia are excessive, that the back-water joins the current of the Nile, when immediately it communicates its motion to the stagnant water, and sweeps away every thing that is planted into the sea. It is a mistake then to assert,—the fuller the Nile, the better for Egypt.

It has been said by various authors, that it was necessary Egypt should be measured every year, on account of the quantity of mud which the

* See this figure in Dr. Shaw, chap. ii. sect. 3. p. 385.

Nile brought down by its inundation, which so covered the land-marks, that no proprietor knew or could discover the limits of his own farm, and that this annual necessity first gave rise to the science of Geometry *. How or when Geometry was first known and practised, is not my business in this place to inquire, though I think the origin here given is a very probable one. The land of Egypt was certainly measured annually : it is as certainly so at this very time ; and if so, the present reason for this is probably the very one which first gave rise to it ; but that this is not owing to the mud of the Nile, will appear on the slightest consideration ; for if Egypt increase a foot in a hundred years, one year's increase of soil could be but the one hundredth part of a foot, which could hide no land-mark whatever ; and we see to this day those in Egypt were huge blocks of granite often with gigantic heads at the end of them ; which the Nile, at the rate Herodotus fixes, of a foot in 100 years, as being added to the soil, would not cover in several thousand years.

It is absurd to suppose that the Nile is to bring down an equal quantity of soil every year from the mountains of Abyssinia ; whatever was the case at first when this river began to flow, we are sure now, that almost every river and brook in Abyssinia runs in a bed of hard stone, the earth having been long removed ; and the rivers now cannot

* Herod. lib. ii. p. 127. sect. 109.

furnish from their rocky beds what they first did from their earthy bottoms, when Egypt was supposed, according to Herodotus, to have its foundation laid in the floods; and therefore, on the first consideration, this annual and equal increase must be impossible.

At Basboch, before the Nile enters Sennaar, I made several hundred trials upon its sediment, as it then came down from the cultivated country of Abyssinia; I thereby found this sediment surprisingly small, being a mixture of fat earth, and a small quantity of sand. At the junction of the Nile and Attaboras I did the same, taking up the water from the middle of the stream, and, having evaporated it afterwards, I found little more sediment than at Sennaar; the water was indeed whiter, and the greatest part of the sediment was sand. I repeated this experiment at Syené with the utmost attention, where the Nile leaves Nubia, and enters Egypt, and I found the quantity of sediment fully nine times increased from what it was at Sennaar, and in it only a trifle of black earth, all the rest being sand. The experiment at Rosetto was not so often repeated as the others; but the result was, that, in the strength of the inundation, the sediment consisted mostly of sand, and, towards the end, was much the greater part of earth. I think these experiments conclusive, as neither the Nile coming fresh from Abyssinia, nor the Atbara, though joined by the Mareb, likewise

likewise from the same country, brought any great quantity of soil from thence.

It was at Syené that the water should have been most charged with mud, for all the accession it was to bring to Egypt was then in its stream; but there the chief part of the sediment was sand, fanned and ventilated with perpetual hot winds, and spread on the surface of the burning desert, never refreshed with the dew of heaven. In that dreary desert, between Gooz and Syene, we saw huge pillars of this light sand; their base in the earth, and heads in the clouds, crossing the wide expanse in various directions, and, upon its becoming calm in the evening, falling to pieces, and burying themselves in the Nile, with whose stream they mixed like an impalpable powder, and were hurried down the river, to compose the many sandy islands we see in the course of it.

It seems to be an established fact, that water of every sort, fresh and salt, that of rivers, and what is stagnant, has from early times sensibly diminished through the whole world; if then the land of Egypt has been continually rising every year, while the quantity of water that was to cover it has become less, or at least not increased, dearth in these latter years must have been frequent in Egypt, for want of the Nile's rising to a proper height; but this is so far from being the case, that, in these last 34 years *, there has not been one season of scar-

* Several Arabian MSS. attest this.

city from the lowness of the Nile, although the rise having been too great, and the waters too abundant, have thrice in that time occasioned famine by carrying away the millet.

If the land of Egypt increased (as Herodotus says) one foot in 100 years, this addition must have appeared in the most ancient public monuments: now, the very base of all the obelisks in Upper Egypt, are bare and visible, and even the paved plane, laid visibly on purpose to receive the Gnomonical shade, is not covered, nor scarcely out of its level, and these small deviations are apparently owing to the falling of neighbouring buildings. There are in the plain, immediately before Thebes, two Colossal statues*, obviously designed for Nilometers, covered with hieroglyphics, as well as more modern inscriptions; these statues are uncovered to the lowest part of their base; whereas we should have now been walking on ground nearly equal in height to their heads. The same may be said of every public monument, if there had been any truth in the surface of Egypt increasing a foot in a hundred years.

It appears, at least as far as Hadrian's time, that if the *pecus* of the Greeks be the peek of the present Egyptians, the same quantity of water overflowed Egypt as now.

The advocates for the supposed increase of the land of Egypt on a foot in 100 years, pressed by

* Shaamy and Taamy, of whom we have already spoken.

this observation, which they cannot contradict, have chose to evade it, by supposing, without foundation, that a smaller measure of the Nile's increase had been introduced by the Saracens to obviate the Nile's scantiness, and this has landed them in a palpable absurdity ; for, while the Nile failed, the introduction of a lesser measure would not have increased the crop ; and, if the quantity of grain had been exacted when it was not produced, this would have only doubled the distress, and made it more apparent : this would never have occasioned the joyful cry, *Wafaa Ullah*, God has given us our desire, *men Jibbel, alla Jibbel*, the Nile has overflowed from the mountains on one side of the valley to the mountains on the other. Besides, there is no country in the world, perhaps, but where this trick may be played with impunity, except in Egypt, for a reason that I am about to explain.

The extension of the land of Egypt northward, the distance between it and Cyprus, and the situation of Canopus, all shew, that no or very little alteration has been made these 3000 years. Dr. Shaw, and the other writers, who are advocates for what has been advanced by Herodotus *, that Egypt hath been produced by the Nile, have deserted this ground of maintaining their hypothesis, and have recourse to the Nilometer to prove,

* Herod. Eut. sect. 4, 5. Diod. Sic. lib. iii. p. 101. Arist. Meteorol. lib. i. cap. 14.

that

that the soil has increased in height, and that a greater quantity of water is necessary now to overflow the land of Egypt than was required in the days of Homer.

If the first part of their assertion can be proved, I shall make no sort of difficulty of giving up the other. But I rather conceive, that none of those who have written upon this subject hitherto, whatever degree of learning and information they may have possessed, have possessed sufficient *data* to explain this subject intelligibly. It seems, indeed, to have remained with *the source of the river*, a secret reserved for latter times.

It will be necessary for us first to consider what the use of a Nilometer was, for what cause it was made, and by whom.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that, in every state or society, the product or revenue should be known, as well as what will be wanted for the supply of the necessities of the people. Now, it was only the ground overflowed by the Nile that could produce grain for the subsistence of the inhabitants and revenue of the state.

The first consideration, then, was, to know how much of the land of Egypt was overflowed in a given term of years, and how much grain was produced upon that average. This could only be ascertained by measuring, and they, therefore, settled with precision the land that was overflowed from the earliest times, and do so to this day. These actual measurements gave them a *maximum*

and a *minimum*, which furnished them with a mean, and thus they were in possession of all the principles necessary for making a Nilometer, by dividing a pillar into corresponding cubits, and divisions of cubits called digits, placing it also firm and perpendicular, so as to be liable to no alteration or injury, though in the middle of the stream.

The first stated measure was certainly that mentioned in scripture, the cubit, *secundum cubitum virilis manus*, measuring from the center of the round bone in the elbow to the point of the middle finger *. This is still the measure of all unpolished nations, but no medium or term, expressive of its exact contents, having been applied, writers have differed as to the length of this cubit, and no standard existing to which it might be referred, a great deal of confusion has thereupon followed. Dr. Arbuthnot † says, that there are two cubits in scripture, the one, 1 foot 9 inches, and $\frac{888}{1000}$ parts of an inch, according to our measure, being the 4th part of a fathom, twice the span, and six times the palm. The other is equal to 1 foot $\frac{824}{1000}$ parts of a foot, or the 400th part of a stadium. I shall not inquire into the grounds he goes on; I believe, however, that neither are precisely the ancient cubit of the east, but both are too large; at least the Egyptian I found to be

* Deut. chap. iii. ver. 11.

† Encyclop. voce Cubit.

very exactly 1 foot $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches, which is 2 inches more than father Merfenne † has made his Hebrew cubit. But this is of less consequence to us now, because Herodotus ‖ informs us, that in his time, and probably at the first institution of a Nilometer, the measure was the Samian cubit, which is about 18 inches English, or half an inch less than the ancient cubit.

The reader will then consider, that the divisions of this Nilometer were a representation of certain facts: That the Nile's reaching to such a division corresponded to a certain quantity of corn that was sown, a proportion of the produce of which was to be paid to the king, the rest to go to the landlord and the labourer.

The Nilometer then ascertained the contract between king and people on these terms, That, in the event of so much corn being produced by the land of Egypt, such a tribute was to be paid: But, in case a certain quantity of ground, less than that, was overflowed, or, which is the same thing, a lesser quantity of grain was produced, then the king was not to exact his tribute, because it was understood such a quantity only was produced as was sufficient for the maintenance of the landholder and labourer. This was referred to the Nilometer, whose division shewed to what height the Nile had risen. Men appointed by the

† Vide Encyclop. voce Cubit.

‖ Herod lib. ii. sect. 168. p. 149.

sovereign were to superintend this Nilometer, and to publish the height of the Nile, whilst the reason why the king was to have the direction of the Nilometer, and not his subjects, was very obvious, though it has not yet been understood, because the king could not gain by substituting false measures, whereas the people might.

The Nile, though in an average of years it brought down nearly the same quantity of water, yet, in particular ones, it varied sometimes more and sometimes less. It is likewise observed, like most other rivers, to run more on one side of the valley for some years than to the other. The consequence of this varying and deviation was, that though, upon the whole, the quantity indicated by the Nilometer was the same, yet nobody knew his *quota*, or what proportion of the whole was drawn from the property of each individual; as for this they were obliged to apply to actual measurement. Supposing a man's property was a section of the land of Egypt, of 12,000 feet from the brink of the river to the mountain, and of any given breadth, 4000 feet of this perhaps were overflowed, whilst the other 8000 remained dry, and above the level of the water. The tenant, after having measured, did not till then know what his farm of 12,000 feet would give him for that year, only 4000 of which had been overflowed by the water, and was then fit for sowing; for this he paid his landlord the highest rent laid upon cultivated land. But the 8000 feet that still remained

remained were not equally useless, though not overflowed by the inundation ; for 4000 of the 8000, which lay by the bank of the river, could be overflowed by machines, and by the labour of man, when, for a certain time, the river was high enough to be within reach of machinery ; so that the value of this 4000 feet to the farmer was equal to the first, *minus* the expence and trouble it cost him for watering it by labour ; for this, then, he paid one half of the rent only to the landlord.

Now, though it was known that the whole farm was 12,000 feet, yet, till it was measured, no one could say how much of that would be overflowed by the Nile alone, and so manured without expence ; how much was to be watered by labour, and so pay half rent ; and how much was to be incapable of any such cultivation, and for that year equally useless to landlord and tenant. I speak not of a fact that happened in antiquity, but one that is necessary and in practice at this very hour ; and though a man, by this mensuration, attains to the knowledge of what his farm produces this same year, this is no general rule, as his cultivated land next year may be doubled, or perhaps reduced to one fourth ; and his neighbour, on the other side of the Nile, may in his farm make up the correspondent deficiency, or excess ; and the average quantity produced by them both being the same, the degree of the Nilometer will be the same likewise.

From

From this it is obvious to infer, that there are two points of great advantage to the tenant: The one is, when it is just high enough not to pay the meery *, for then he has all the harvest to himself, and pays nothing, though he has very near the same quantity as if he was subject to the tax. The other is, when near the whole of these 12,000 feet is overflowed by the Nile, but before the water is in contact with the current of the river; for then, though he is liable to pay the meery, he has sown the greatest part of his land possible, without additional labour or expence; more than this is loss, for then the water of the inundation is put likewise in motion, and all the floating pulverised earth that has been trode into an impalpable powder, during March, April, and May, is swept away by the current into the sea, and nothing left but a bare, cold, hard till, which produces little, and is not easily pulverised by the poor instruments of husbandry there in use, when neither farmer nor landholder pays any thing, because, indeed, there is not any receipt.

However, from this uncertainty one thing arises which does not seem to have been understood; for the tenant, not knowing precisely the quantity of seed that he may want, comes to his farm unprovided, and, being uncertain of its produce, takes his land only from year to year; the landlord furnishes him with seed †, and even with all labouring utensils.

* The king's yearly land-tax, or rent.

† Gen. chap. xlvii. ver. 20 & 23.

And here I am to explain what I have before advanced, what to some will seem a paradox, That the substituting false measures in the Nilometer by the sovereign is absolutely impracticable. Supposing the height of the Nilometer, when at 8 cubits, shewed that there was just corn enough to maintain the inhabitants, and that the tenant knew, by the quantity of land measured, that he had barely what was to pay his rent and support his family; this he must know before he sowed, because he measured immediately after the inundation; and this he must know likewise by the corn he borrows for seed from his landlord, who, as I have said, furnishes his tenant both with seed and labouring utensils. If, then, he finds he can barely maintain himself, and not pay his rent, upon the proclamation at the Nilometer, he deserts his farm, and neither plows nor sows*, but flies to Palestine to the Arabs, or into the cities, and brings famine along with him. The next year there is a plague, and sweeps all those poor wretches, in a bad state of health by living upon bad food, into their graves, so that the introduction, of a supposed false measure, directly advanced by Dr. Shaw †, and often alluded to by others, but

* This was apparently the reason why Joseph, who had bought not only the lands, but the people of Egypt likewise, transferred them from farms, not convenient for them, to others where they could thrive. The same they do spontaneously at this day, now they are free.

† Dr. Shaw, chap. ii. sect. 3. p. 383.

always

always without possibility of foundation, is one of the many errors he has fallen into.

He knew nothing but of the Delta, never was in Upper, and no considerable time even in Lower Egypt, but when the Nile had overflowed it, and I suppose never conversed with a fellah, or Egyptian peasant, in his life. All his *wonders* are in the land of *Zoan* *, and his observations should have reached no further, because they are not fact, but fanciful imaginations of his own; not from any bad intention, but because he never was in the way of being better informed, but determined not to abandon a system he had once formed.

Herodotus † mentions, that in the time of Mæris, when the minimum came to be 8 Samian cubits, all Egypt below Memphis was overflowed, but that in his days it took 16 cubits, or at least, 15 cubits in his time; and the uncertainty of these two terms shews, that there were unaccountable inequalities, even in his days, as we shall find there have been ever since. But I must here beg leave to ask, why we should believe Herodotus knew the management of the Nilometer more than travellers have done since, as he tells us constantly throughout this part of his history, that when he inquired of the priests concerning the Nile, they would tell him nothing about it ‡?

* Psalm lxxviii. ver. 12.

† Herod. eut. sect. 13.

‡ Herod. lib. ii. sect. 19.

In Mæris's time there were great lakes dug, as Herodotus says *, to carry off the superfluous water, to what place is not said, but surely into the desert for the use of the Arabs. Now, unless we knew what time these lakes were opened to receive the stream, we do not know whether it was the evacuation by the lake, or scarcity of the water that impeded the rise of the Nile upon the Nilometer. We have no account of these transactions, and we shall be less inclined to rely upon them, when I shall shew, that the Nilometer could be of no use in solving this question at all, either in Herodotus's days, or any time since, without a previous knowledge of several other circumstances never yet taken into the calculation, and of which Herodotus must have been ignorant.

But let us grant that the Nile in Mæris's time rose only 8 cubits, and in the days of Herodotus to 16, let us see if, at certain periods afterwards, it kept to any thing like that proportion. Above 400 years after Herodotus, Strabo travelled in Egypt; he went through the whole country from Alexandria to beyond Syene and the first cataract; and as he is an historian whose character is established, both for veracity and sagacity, we may receive what he says as unexceptionable evidence, especially as he travelled in such company that it is not probable the priests could have refused him any thing. Now Strabo † says, that, in his days,

* Herod., lib. ii. sect. 4. 101. and 149.

† Strabo, lib. xiii. p. 945.

8 cubits were a *minimum*, or the *Wafaa Ullah* of the Nile's increase; therefore, from Mæris's time to Strabo there is not an inch difference in the *minimum*, and this includes the space of 1400 years.

It may be said, indeed, that the passage in Strabo * imports, that, in the time of Petronius, by a particular care of the banks and calishes, the Nile at 8 peeks (or cubits) enabled the Egyptians to pay their meery without hardship; but this was by particular industry, more than what had been in common use, and this, too, I conceive to be Strabo's meaning. But let us compute from Herodotus, who says that 16, or at least 15, were necessary in his time, whilst Strabo informs us, that, before Petronius exerted himself as to the banks and calishes just mentioned, the extreme abundance must then have been at 12, and the *minimum* at 10. Now, by this passage, beyond all exception, it is clear that there could have been no increase indicated by the Nilometer; for 10 cubits watered the whole land of Egypt sufficiently in Strabo's time, whereas 16 and 15 were necessary in the days of Herodotus: and I must likewise observe, that if we should suppose the same industry and attention used in Mæris's time that was in Petronius's, (and there is every reason to induce us to think there was) then the proof is positive, that there was no difference in the soil of

* Strabo, lib. xvii. p. 915.

Egypt indicated by the Nilometer for the first 1400 years.

From this let us descend to Hadrian, about 100 years afterwards. We know from Pliny*, and from an inscription upon a medal of great brass of Hadrian's, who was himself in Egypt, that 16 cubits were then the fiscal term or rise of the Nile, by which the Egyptians paid their rent; and this is precisely what Herodotus says, in his time, was no more than sufficient.

About the beginning of the 4th century, in the emperor Julian's reign †, 15 cubits were a sufficient minimum to incur the payment of the tribute, and this is one of the terms that Herodotus fixes upon, as being sufficient to oblige the payment in his days; and the other is 16, or a cubit more; so that if the Nilometer proves any thing at all, it is this, that presumptively the Nile has never increased from Mæris to Petronius's, or in 1400 years, and certainly that, if it has not diminished, it has not increased for 700 years from Herodotus to the emperor Julian.

Procopius, in his first book, I think, says, that 18 pecks was too full a Nile, and occasioned dearth by its quantity. But, in the middle of the 6th century, he tell ‡ us it required 18 cubits for a minimum, by which Egypt was to pay the meery; so that in 100 years from Julian to Justinian, the

* Plin. lib. xxxvi. cap. 7. Philost. de icon. Nili.

† Julian. Epist. egdicio prefecto Egypti.

‡ Procop. lib. iii. de Reb. Goth.

minimum had increased three cubits, which was $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet; not one foot in 100 years as the proposition bears; and this would prove too much, if it was true, but it is impossible.

Thus far, then, we are at liberty to say, that, as long as Egypt was a Greek kingdom, no visible alteration or increase of the soil can be fairly established from history or inspection.

C H A P. XVII.

*The same Subject continued—Nilometer what—
How divided and measured.*

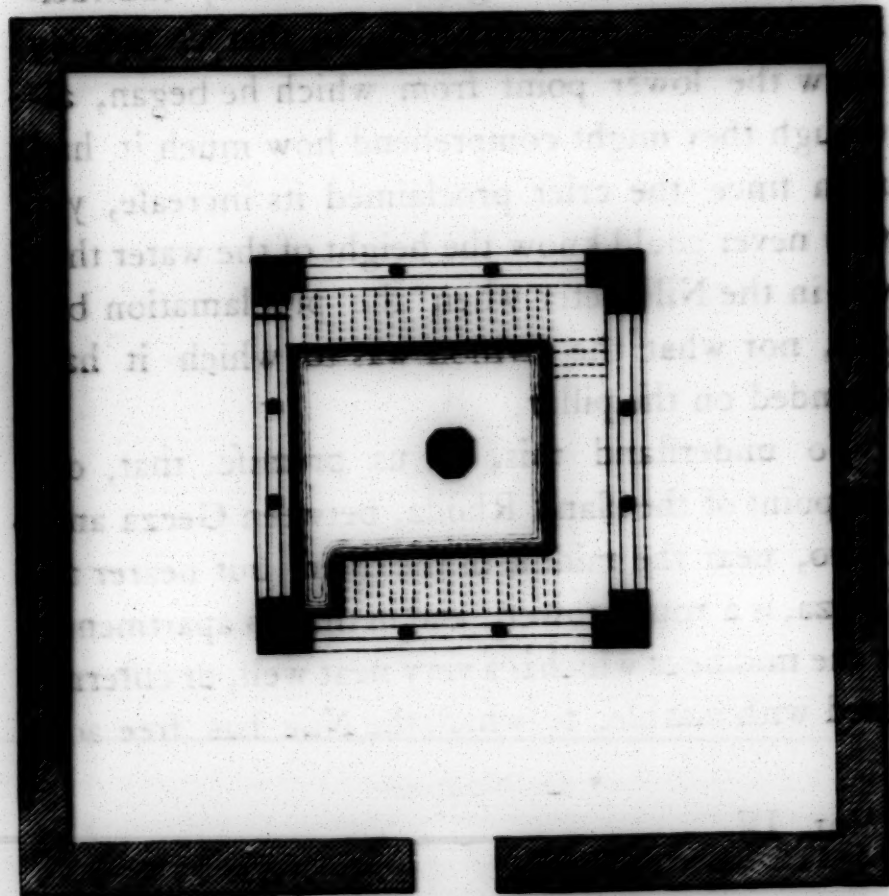
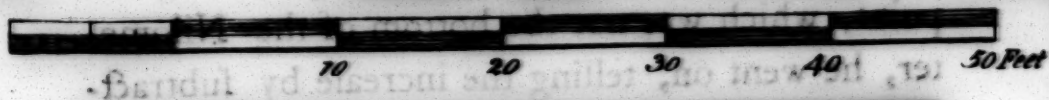
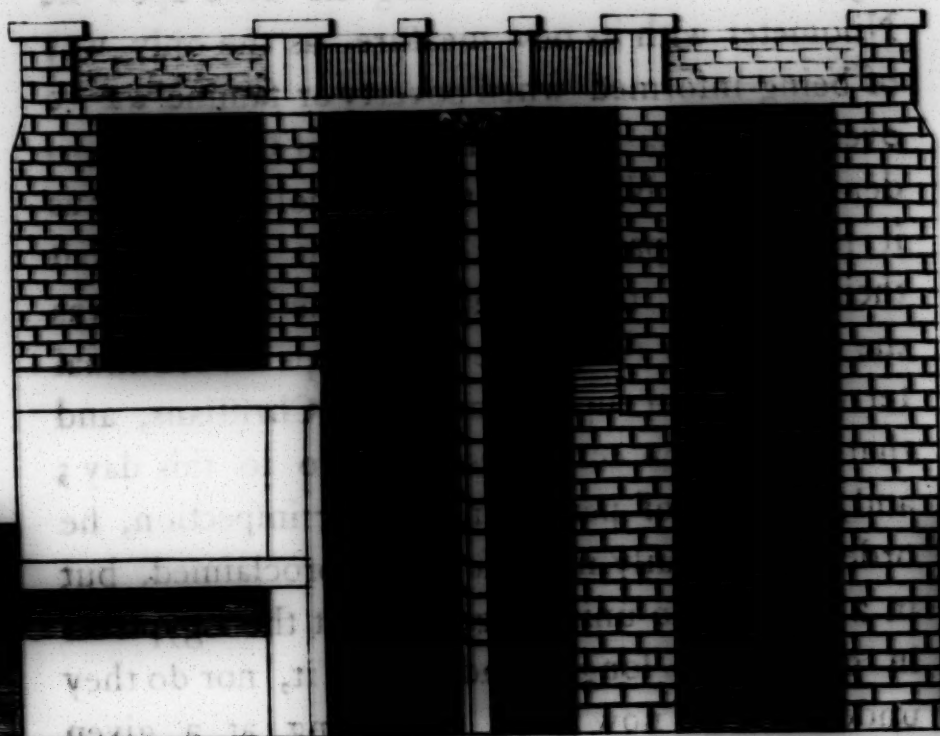
IN the 7th century a revolution happened that stops our Grecian account from proceeding farther, Egypt was conquered by an ignorant and barbarous enemy, the Saracen, and Amru Ibn el Aas was governor of Egypt for Omar, the second Caliph after Mahomet. Omar was a foreigner, conqueror, bigot and a tyrant; he destroyed the Grecian Nilometer from motives of religion, the same which had before moved him to burn the library of Alexandria; and after, with the same degree of *sound judgment*, determined to establish his empire at Medina, in the middle of the peninsula of Arabia, a country without water, and surrounded on all sides with barren sands; but he was nevertheless desirous of feeding his famished Saracens with the wheat of Egypt, a province he had subdued; for this purpose he ordered Amru to begin a canal from the Nile to the Red Sea, to
carry

carry the wheat to the Arabian Gulf, and thence to Yambo, the port of Medina on that gulf.

The traitor Greeks, who had delivered the country to the Saracens, had probably informed him of the great plenty which constantly reigned in Egypt, and which every body had an opportunity of knowing by the cheapness of grain at the market.

Omar thought that a larger tribute was due to put the conquerors a little more upon a footing with the conquered ; for Egypt, which had once 20,000 cities, had not then the tenth part of them. Having therefore a larger extent to cultivate, with the same quantity of water, it produced more grain, and at the same time having fewer people to eat it, nothing was less oppressive than that a part of the surplus of the produce should go in augmentation of the tribute. For this purpose, following the very weak lights of his own judgment, he introduced a different measure on the Nilometer, and the consequence of that measure, imposed by a conqueror, affected the people (not reflecting upon their decrease in population) so much, that they prepared to fly the country ; from which it immediately would have followed, that all Egypt would have lain desolate and uncultivated, and all Arabia been starved.

They were perfectly acquainted with their ancient measure, and it is probable that Omar made an excessive addition by the new Nilometers which he had erected ; so that faith being thereby broken between the government and people, the
Egyptians



(Mikeas .

Egyptians set about watching the Nile upon the Nilometer with its new measure, as the only way of being informed when poverty or famine was to overtake them. This being told to Omar, he ordered the new Nilometer to be demolished; but as it had been part of the complaint to him, that their counting the divisions of the Mikeas* was the reason why the people were kept in continual terror, he shut up the access to Christians, and that prohibition continues in Cairo to this day; and, instead of permitting ocular inspection, he ordered the daily increase to be proclaimed, but in a manner so unintelligible, that the Egyptians in general no longer understood it, nor do they understand it now; for, beginning at a given point, which was not the bottom of the Nilometer, he went on, telling the increase by subtracting from the upper division; so that as nobody knew the lower point from which he began, although they might comprehend how much it had risen since the crier proclaimed its increase, yet they never could know the height of the water that was in the Nilometer when the proclamation began, nor what the division was to which it had ascended on the pillar.

To understand this, let us premise, that, on the point of the island Rhoda, between Geeza and Cairo, near the middle of the river, but nearer to Geeza, is a round tower, and in that an apartment, in the middle of which is a very neat well, or cistern, lined with marble, to which the Nile has free ac-

* Or Nilometer.

cess, through a large opening like an embrasure, the bottom of the well being on the same level with the bottom of the river. In the middle of this well rises a thin column, as far as I can remember, of eight faces of blue and white marble, to the foot of which, if you are permitted to descend, you are then on the same plane with the foot of the column and bottom of the river. This pillar is divided into 20 peeks, called Draa El Belledy, of 22 inches deep*.

The two lowermost peeks are not divided at all, but are left absolutely without mark, to stand for the quantity of sludge the water deposits there, and which occupies the place of water. Two peeks are then divided on the right hand into 24 digits each; then, on the left, four peeks are divided each into 24 digits; then, on the right, four; and, on the left, another four: again, four on the right, which complete the number of 18 peeks from the first division marked on the pillar each of 22 inches. The whole, marked and unmarked, amounts to $36\frac{3}{4}$ feet English.

On the night of St. John, when the Nucla has fallen, that is, when they see the rain water from Ethiopia is so mixed with the Nile that at Cairo it is become exhalable, and falls down in dews upon the earth, which till that time it never does, they then begin to cry, having five peeks of water marked on the Mikeas, and two unmarked for the sludge, of which they take no notice in the pro-

* Vid. geometrical elevation and plan of the Mikeas.

clamation.

clamation. Their first proclamation, suppose the Nile hath risen 12 digits, is 12 from six, or it wants 12 digits to be six peeks. When it rises three more, it is nine from six, or, *Tiffa am Sitte*, and so it goes on, subtracting the digits from the upper number, without giving you any information what that six is, or that they began to count from five, which I suppose is the assumed depth of the Nile before it begins to increase.

When the river has risen on the Mikeas eight peeks and 25 digits, they then call *Wahad am er-ba Tush*, i. e. one from 14, five peeks of water being left marked in the Mikeas, but only eight of augmentation that has risen upon the column, according to the divisions, which make in all 13 peeks and 23 digits, which wants one from being nine of augmentation, and that being added, they cry *Wafaa Ullab*, which obliges the country to the payment of the meery. Again, suppose 17 peeks, or cubits, and 23 digits to stand on the column, the cry is *Wahad am temen Tush*, i. e. one from 18, and, upon this being filled, and the divisions complete by a certain day in August, the next is *Afbareen*, 20, or, *men Fibbel, alla Fibbel*, from mountain to mountain, that is, 18 peeks marked on the pillar, and two unmarked at the foot of it, supposed to be covered with mud. All the land of Egypt is then fitted for cultivation; the great canal at Mansoura, and several others, are opened, which convey the water into the desert, and hinder any further stagnation on the fields, though

there is still a great part of the water to come from Ethiopia, but which would not drain soon enough to fit the land for tillage, were the inundation suffered to go on.

Now, from these 16 peeks the *Wafaa Ullab* if we deduce 5, which were in the well, and marked on the column when the crier began, there will have been but 11 peeks of rise as a minimum, which still made the meery due, or 15, deducing 5 from 20, the maximum, *men fibbel, alla fibbel*, the increase that fits all Egypt for cultivation, after which is loss and danger. Therefore, suppose the 16 peeks on the medal of Hadrian to have been the minimum or fiscal term, we must infer, that the same quantity of inundation produced the *Wafaa Ullab* or payment of the meery, in Hadrian's time, that it does at this day, and consequently the land of Egypt has not increased since his time, that is, in the last 1600 years.

As a summary of the whole relating to this periodical inundation of the Nile, I shall here deliver my opinion, which I think, as it is founded upon ancient history, consonant to that of intermediate times, and, invincibly established by modern observation, can never be overturned by any argument whatever. And this I shall do as shortly as possible, lest, having anticipated it in part by reflections explanatory of the narrative, it may at first sight have the appearance of repetition.

It is agreed on all hands, that Egypt, in early ages, had water enough to overflow the ground
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that composed it. It was then a narrow valley as it is now ; having been early the seat of the arts, crowded with a multitude of people, enriched by the most flourishing and profitable trade, and its numbers supplied and recruited when needful by the immense nations to the southward of it, having grain and all the necessaries and luxuries of life (oil excepted) for the great multitude which it fed, Egypt was averse to any communication with strangers till after the foundation of Alexandria.

The first princes, after the building of Memphis, finding the land turn broader towards the Delta, whereas before it had been a narrow stripe confined between mountains ; observing also that they had great command of water for fitting their land for cultivation, nay, that great part of it ran to waste without profit, which must have been the case, since it is so at this day : observing likewise, that the superabundance of water in the Nile did harm, and that the neighbouring sandy plains of Libya needed nothing but a judicious distribution of that water, to make it equal to the land of Egypt in fertility, and surpass it in the variety of natural productions, applied themselves very early to digging large lakes *, that, preserving a degree of level sufficient, all the year long watered the dry deserts of Libya like so many fruitful showers. Geometry, architecture, and all the mechanic

* We know that these lakes were dug, and in use as early as Moses's time. Exod. chap. vii. ver. 19. chap. viii. ver. 5.

arts of those times, were employed to accomplish those designs. These canals and vast works communicated one with another to imprison the water, and set it again at liberty at proper times.

We may be satisfied this was observed attentively all the time of the dynasties, or reigns of the Egyptian princes. After the accession of the Ptolemies, who were strangers, the multitude of inhabitants had greatly decreased. There was no occasion for works to water lands that were not peopled; so far as they were necessary for cities, gardens, and pleasure-grounds, they were always kept up. The larger and more extensive conduits, dykes, and sluices, though they were not used, were protected by their own solidity and strength from sudden ruin. Egypt, now confined within its ancient narrow valley, had water enough to keep it in culture, and make it still the granary of the inhabited world.

When the ancient race of the Ptolemies ended, a scene of war and confusion, and bad government at home, was succeeded by a worse under foreigners abroad. The number of its inhabitants was still greatly decreased, and the valley had yet a quantity of water enough to fit it for annual culture.

In the reign of the second emperor after the Roman conquest, Petronius Arbiter, a man well known for taste and learning, was governor of Egypt. He saw with regret the decay of the magnificent works of the ancient native Egyptian princes.

princes. His sagacity penetrated the usefulness and propriety of those works. He saw they had once made Egypt populous and flourishing. Like a good citizen and subject of the state he served, and from a humane and rational attachment to that which he governed, he hoped to make it again as flourishing under the new government as it had been under the old. Like a man of sense, and master of his subject, he laughed at the dastardly spirit of the modern Egyptians, anxious and trembling lest the Nile should not overflow land enough to give them bread, when they had the power in their hands to procure plenty in abundance for six times the number of the people then in Egypt. To shew them this, he repaired their ancient works, raised their banks, refitted their sluices, and by thus imprisoning, as I may say, the inundation at a proper time in the beginning, he overflowed all Egypt with 8 pecks of water, as fully, and as effectually, as to the purposes of agriculture, as before and since it hath been with 16; and did not open the sluices to allow the water to run and waste in the desert (where there were now no longer any inhabitants), till the land of the valley of Egypt had been so well watered as only to need that the inundation should retire in time to leave the farmer the ground firm enough for plowing and sowing.

Let any one read what I have already quoted from Strabo; it is just what I have here repeated, but in fewer words. Let him consider how fair
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an experiment this of Petronius was, that by re-establishing the works of Mæris, and putting the inundation to the same profit that Mæris did, he found the same quantity of water overflow the same quantity of ground, and consequently that the land of Egypt had not been raised an inch from Mæris's time to that of Petronius, above 1400 years.

Now the second part of the question comes, what difference of measure was made by the Saracens, and how does it now stand, after that period, as to the supposed rise of a foot in a hundred years? It is now above 1100 years since the * first of the Hegira, and near 900 years since the erection of the present Mikeas, which being equal to the period between Mæris and Herodotus, and again to that between Herodotus and Julian, we should begin to be certain if any such increase in the land has ever, from Mæris to the present time, been indicated by the Nilometer.

The reader will perhaps be surprised, at what I am going to advance, That those writers, as well as their supporters who have pronounced so positively on this subject, have not furnished themselves with the *data* which are absolutely necessary to solve this question. Quantity is only to be ascertained by measures, yet none of them have settled that only medium of judging. The Mikeas, or pillar, is the subject to be measured, and

* A. C. 622.

they are not yet agreed within 20 feet of its extreme height, nor about the division of any part of it. As this accusation appears to be a strong one, I shall set down the proof for the reader's consideration, that it may not be supposed I mean to criticise improperly, or to do any author injustice.

And first of the Mikeas. Mr. Thomas Humes, a gentleman quoted by Dr. Shaw *, who had been a great many years a factor at Cairo, says, that the Mikeas is 58 feet English in length. Now, there is really no reason why such an enormous pillar should have been built, as the Nile would drown all Cairo before it was to rise to this height; accordingly, as we have seen, its height is not so much by near 22 feet. Dr. Perry † next, who has wrote largely upon the subject, says, the Mikeas, or column, is divided into 24 peeks, and each peek or cubit is 24 inches nearly. Dr. Pococke ‡, who travelled at the same time, agrees in the division of 24 peeks, but says that these peeks are unequal. The 16 lower he supposes are 21 inches, the 4 next, 24 inches, and the uppermost, 22. So that one of these gentlemen makes the Mikeas 43 feet, which is above six feet more than the truth, and the other 48, which is above 11; besides the second error which Dr. Pococke has committed, by saying the divisions are of three different dimensions, when they really

* Shaw's Travels, chap. ii. sect. 3. p. 382. † Description of the East, vol. I. p. 256. ‡ A View of the Levant, p. 282. 284. 286.

are not any one of them what he conceives, nor is the Mikeas divided unequally.

As for Mr. Humes, who had lived long at Cairo, I would by no means be thought to insinuate a doubt of his veracity : There may, in change of times, be occasions when Christians may be admitted to the Mikeas, and be allowed to measure exactly. This, however, must be with a long rod, divided and brought on purpose, with a high stool or scaffold, and this sort of preparation would be attended with much danger if seen in the hand of a Christian without, and much more if he was to attempt to apply it to the column within. At Cairo a man may see or hear any thing he desires, by the ordinary means of gold, which no Turk can withstand or refuse ; but often one villain is paid for being your guide, and another villain, his brother, pays himself, by informing against you ; the end is mischief to yourself, which, if you are a stranger, generally involves also your friends. You are asked, What did you at the Mikeas when you know it is forbidden ? and your silence after that question is an acknowledgment of guilt ; sentence immediately follows, whatever it may be, and execution upon it. I rather am inclined to think, that though several Christians have obtained admission to the Mikeas, very few have had the means or instruments, and fewer still the courage, to measure this column exactly ; which leads me to believe, as Dr. Shaw says, he procured the number of feet in a letter
from

from Mr. Humes, that the Doctor has mistaken 58 for 38, which, in a foreign hand, is very easily done; it would then be 38, instead of 58 English feet, and to that number it might approach near enough, and the difference be accounted for, from an aukward manner of measuring with a trembling hand, there being then only a little more than one foot of error.

From what I have just now mentioned, I hope it is sufficiently plain to the reader, that the length and division of the column in the Mikeas, by which the quantity of water, and consequently the increase of the soil, was to be determined, was utterly unknown to those travellers who had undertaken this mode of determining it.

I shall now inquire, whether they were better instructed in the length of that measure, which, after the Saracen conquest, was introduced into the Nilometer, of Geeza, where it has remained unaltered since the year 245? Dr. Shaw introduces the consideration of this subject by an enumeration of many different peeks, seven of which he quotes from Arabian authors, as being then in use. First, the Homaræus $1\frac{2}{3}$ digit of the common cubit. 2. The Hafamean, or greater peek, of 24 digits. 3. The Belalæan, less than the Hafamean. 4. The black cubit less than the Belalæan $2\frac{2}{3}$ digits. 5. The Jossippæan $\frac{2}{3}$ of a digit less than the black cubit. 6. The Chord, or Afaba, $1\frac{2}{3}$ digit less than the black peek. 7. The Maharanius,

Maharanius, $2\frac{2}{3}$ digits less than the black cubit *. Now, I will appeal to any one to what all this information amounts, when I am not told the length of the common peek to which he refers the rest, as being $1\frac{1}{2}$ digit, or two digits more or less. He himself thinks that the measuring peek is the Stambouline peek, but then, for computation's sake, he takes a peek of his own invention, being a medium of 4 or 5 gueffes, and fixes it at 25 inches, for which he has no authority but his own imagination.

I will not perplex the reader more with the different measure of these peeks, between the Hasamean and great peek of Kalkasendas, which is 18 inches, and the black peek, a model of which Dr. Bernard † has given us from an Arabic MS. at Oxford, the difference is 10 inches. The first being 18 inches equal to the Samian peek, the other $28\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and from this difference we may judge, joined to the uncertainties of the height and divisions of the Mikeas, how impossible it is for us to determine the increase of 12 inches in a hundred years.

As the generality of writers have fixed upon the Constantinople, or Stambouline peek, for the measure of the Mikeas, in which choice they have erred, we will next seek what is the measure of the Stambouline peek, and whether they have in this article been better informed.

* Shaw, p. 380. 381.

† Descript. de l'Egypte, p. 60.

M. de Maillet, French consul at Cairo, says, that this peek is equal to 2 French feet, or very nearly 26 inches of our measure; and, to add to this another mistake, he states, that by this peek the Mikeas is measured; and, for the completing of the confusion, he adds, that the Nile must rise 48 French feet before it covers *all their lands*. What he means by all their lands is to very little purpose to inquire, for he would probably have been drowned in his closet in which he made these computations, long before he had seen the Nile at that height, or near it.

Without, then, wandering longer in this extraordinary confusion, which I have only stated to shew that a traveller may differ from Dr. Shaw, and yet be right, and that this writer, however learned he may be, cannot, for want of information, be competent to solve this question which he so much insists upon, I shall now, with great submission to the judgment of my reader, endeavour to explain, in as few words as possible, how the real state of the matter stands, and he will then apply it as he pleases.

There was a very ingenious gentleman whom I met with at Cairo, M. Antes, a German by birth, and of the Moravian persuasion, who, both to open to himself more freely the opportunities of propagating his religious tenets, and to gratify his own mechanical turn, rather than from a view of gain, to which all his society are (as he was) perfectly indifferent, exercised the trade of watch-maker at

Cairo.

Cairo. This very worthy and sagacious young man was often my unwearied and useful partner in many inquiries and trials, as to the manner of executing some instruments in the most compendious form for experiments proposed to be made in my travels. By his assistance, I formed a rod of brass, of half an inch square, and of a thickness which did not easily warp, and would not alter its dimensions unless with a violent heat. Upon the three faces of this brazen rod we traced, with good glasses and dividers, the measure of three different peeks, then the only three known in Cairo, the exact length of which was taken from the standard model furnished me by the Cadi. The first was the Stambouline, or Constantinople peek, exactly $26\frac{7}{12}$ inches; the second, the Hendaizy, of $24\frac{9}{12}$ inches; and the third the peek El Belledy, of 22 inches, all English measure.

It was natural to suppose, that, after knowing, as we do, that no alteration has been made in the Mikeas since the 245th year of the Hegira, that the peek of Constantinople, a foreign measure, was probably then not known, nor introduced into Egypt; nor, till after the conquest of Sultan Selim, in the year 1516, was it likely to be the peek with which the Mikeas was measured. It did not, as I conceive, exist in the 245th of the Hegira, though, even if it had, its dimensions may have been widely different from those fixed upon by the number of writers whose authority we have quoted,

quoted, but who do not agree. It was not likely to be the Hendaizy peek either, for this, too, was a foreign measure, originally from the island of Meroë, and well known to the Egyptians in Upper Egypt, but not at all to the Saracens their present masters. The peek, El Belledy, the measure in common use, and known to all the Egyptians, was the proper cubit to be employed in an operation which concerned a whole nation, and was, therefore, the measure made use of in the division of the Mikeas, for that column, as I have said, is divided equally into peeks, or draas, called *Draa El Belledy*, consisting of 22 inches; and each of these peeks is again divided into 24 digits.

A very ingenious author, who treats of the particular circumstances of those times, in his MS. called *Han el Mohaderat*, says, that the inhabitants of Seide counted 24 peeks on their Nilometer, when there were 18 peeks marked as the rise of the water upon the Mikeas at Rhoda; and this shews perfectly two things: First, that they knew the whole secret of counting there both by the marked and unmarked part of the column; for the peek of the Mikeas being 22 inches English, it was, by consequence, four inches larger each peek than the Samian peek; so that if, to 20 peeks of Seide, you add twenty times four inches, which is 80, the difference of the two peeks, when divided by 18, gives four, which, added to the 20 peeks on the column, make 24 peeks, the
number

number fought. Secondly, That this observation in the Han el Mohaderat sufficiently confirms what I have said both of the length of the column and length of the peek; that the former is 20 peeks in height, and that the measure, by which this is ascertained, is the peek El Belledy of 22 inches, as it appears on the brass rod, four inches longer than the Samian peek, and consequently is not the peek of Stambouline, nor any foreign measure whatever.

A traveller thinks he has attained to a great deal of precision, when, observing 18 peeks on the highest division of the column from its base, or bottom of the well, he finds it 37 feet; he divides this by 18, and the quotient is 24 inches; when he should divide it by 20, and the answer would be 22 and a fraction, the true content of the peek El Belledy, or peek of the Mikeas. This erroneous division of his he calls the peek of the Mikeas; and comparing it with what authors, less informed than himself, have said, he names the Stambouline peek, and then the black peek, when it really is his own peek, the creature of his own error or inadvertence; but, as he does not know this, it is handed down from traveller to traveller, till unfortunately it is adopted by some man of reputation, and it then becomes, as in this case, a sort of literary crime to any man, from the authority of his own eyes and hands, to dispute it.

Mr. Pococke makes two very curious and sensible remarks in point of fact, but of which he does not know the reason. "The Nile, he says, in the beginning, turns red, and sometimes green; then the waters are unwholesome. He supposes that the source of the Nile beginning to flow plentifully, the waters at first bring away that green or red filth which may be about the lakes at its rise, or at the rise of these small rivers that flow into it, near its principal source; for, though there is so little water in the Nile, when at lowest, that there is hardly any current in many parts of it, yet it cannot be supposed that the water should stagnate in the bed of the Nile, so as to become green. Afterwards the water becomes very red and still more turbid, and then it begins to be wholesome *."

The true reason of this appearance is from those immense marshes spread over the country about Narea and Caffa, where there is little level, and where the water accumulates, and is stagnant, before it overflows into the river Abiad, which rises there. The overflowing of these immense marshes carry first that discoloured water into Egypt, then follows, in Abyssinia, the overflowing of the great lake Tzana, through which the Nile passes, which, having been stagnated and without rain for six months, under a scorching sun, joins its putrid waters with the first. There

* Pococke, vol. i. p. 199. 200.

are, moreover, very few rivers in Abyssinia that run after November, as they stand in prodigious pools below, in the country of the Shangalla, and afford drink for the elephant, and habitation and food for the hippopotamus. These pools likewise throw off their stagnant water into the Nile on receiving the first rains; at last the rivers, marshes, and lakes, being refreshed by showers, (the rain becoming constant) and passing through the kingdom of Sennaar, the soil of which is a red bole; this mixture, and the moving sands of the deserts, fall into the current, and precipitate all the viscous and putrid substances, which cohere and float in the river; and thence (as Pococke has well observed) the sign of the Nile being wholesome, is not when it is clear and green, but when mingled with fresh water, and after precipitation it becomes red and turbid, and stains the water of the Mediterranean.

The next remark of Mr. Pococke * is equally true. It has been observed, says he, that after the rainy season is over, the Nile fallen, and the whole country drained from inundation, it has begun again to rise; and he gives an instance of that in December 1737, when it had a sudden increase, which alarmed all Egypt, where the received opinion was that it presaged calamities. This also is said to have happened in the time of Cleopatra, when their government was subverted,

* Pococke, vol. i. p. 201.

their ancient race of kings extinguished in the person of that princess, and Egypt became a province to the Romans.

The reader will not expect, in these enlightened times, that I should use arguments to convince him, that this rising of the Nile had nothing to do with the extinction of the race of the Ptolemies, though popular preachers and prophets have always made use of these fortuitous events to confirm the vulgar in their prejudices.

The rains, that cease in Abyssinia about the 8th of September, leave generally a sickly season in the low country; but other rains begin towards the end of October, in the last days of the Ethiopic month Tekemt, which continue moderately about three weeks, and end the 8th of November, or the 12th of the Ethiopic month Hedar. All sickness and epidemical diseases then disappear, and the 8th of that month is the feast of St. Michael, the day the king marches, and his army begins their campaign; but the effect of these second rains seldom make any, or a very short appearance in Egypt, all the canals being open. But these are the rains upon which depend their latter crops, and for which the Agows, at the source of the Nile, pray to the river, or to the genius residing in the river. We had plentiful showers both in going and coming to that province, especially in our journey out. Whenever these rains prove excessive, as in some particular years it seems they do, though but very rarely, the land-floods,

and those from the marshes, falling upon the ground, already much hardened and broken into chafms, by two months intense heat of the sun, run violently into the Nile without sinking into the earth. The consequence is this temporary rising of the Nile in December, which is as unconnected with the good and bad crops of Egypt, as it is on those of Palestine or Syria.

The quantity of rain that falls in Ethiopia varies greatly from year to year, as do the months in which it falls. The quantity that fell, during 1770, in Gondar, between the vernal equinox and the 8th of September, through a funnel of one foot English in diameter, was 35,555 inches; and, in 1771, the quantity that fell in the same circumference was 41,355 inches in the same space *.

In 1770, August was the rainy month; in 1771 July. Both these years the people paid the meery, and the *Wafaa Ullab* was in August. When July is the rainy month, the rains generally cease for some days in the beginning of August, and then a prodigious deal falls in the latter end of that month and the first week of September. In other years, July and August are the violent rainy months, whilst June is fair. And lastly, in others, May, June, July, August and the first week of September. Now, we shall suppose (which is the

* See Table, or Register of Rain, that fell in these years, inserted at the end of this volume.

most common case of all) that every month from June doubles its rain. The *Wafaa Ullah* generally takes place about the 9th of August, the tribute being then due, and all attention to the Mikeas is abandoned at 14 real peeks, the Calish is then cut, and the water let down to the Delta.

Now these 14 peeks are not a proof how much water there is to overflow the land : for supposing nine days for its passage from Ethiopia, then the 9th of August receives at Cairo no later rains than those that have fallen the 1st of August in Ethiopia, and from that date till the 17th of September, the Nile increases one third of its whole inundation, which is never suffered to appear on the Mikeas, but is turned down to the lakes in the Delta, as I suppose it always has been ; so that the quantity of water which falls in Ethiopia hath never yet been ascertained, and never can be by the Mikeas, nor can it ever be known what quantity of water comes into Egypt, or what quantity of ground it is sufficient to overflow, unless the dykes were to be kept close till the Nile attained its extreme height, which would be about the 25th of September, long before which it would be over the banks and mounds, if they held in till then, or have swept Cairo and all the Delta into the Mediterranean, and if it should not do that, it would retire so late from the fields as to leave the ground in no condition to be sown that year.

I do not comprehend what idea other travellers have formed of the beginning of the inundation
of

of the Nile, as they seem to admit that the banks are not overflowed ; and this is certainly the case ; because the cities and villages are built there as securely as on the highest part of Egypt, and even when the Nile has risen to its greatest height they still are obliged to water those spots with machines. In another part of the work it is explained how the calishes carry the water upon the lands, approaching always to the banks as the river rises in proportion, and these calishes being derived from the Nile at right angles with the stream, and carrying the water by the inclination of the ground, in a direction different from the course of the river, the water is perfectly stagnated at the foot of the hills, till accumulated as the stream rises, it moves in a contrary direction backwards again, and approaches its banks. But when the inundation is so great that the back-water comes in contact with the current of the Nile, by known laws it must partake the same motion with it, and so all Egypt become one torrent.

Dr. Shaw, indeed *, says, that there seems to be a descent from the banks to the foot of the mountains, but this he considers as an optic fallacy ; I wish he had told us upon what principle of optics ; but if this was really so, how comes it that the banks are every year dry, when the foot of the mountains is at the same time under inundation ; or, in other words, what is the reason of that undif-

* Shaw's Travels, sect. 4. p. 401.

puted fact, that the foot of the mountains is laid under water in the beginning of the river's rising, while the ground which they cultivate by labour near the banks, cannot supply itself from the river by machines, till near the height of the inundation? these facts will not be controverted by any traveller, who has ever been in Upper Egypt; but if this had been admitted as truth instead of an optic fallacy, this question would have immediately followed: If the land of Egypt at the foot of the mountains, is the lowest, the first overflowed, and the longest covered with water, and often the only part overflowed at all, whence can it arise that it is not upon a level with the banks of the river if it is true that the land of Egypt receives additional height every year by the mud from Abyffinia deposited by the stream? and this question would not have been so easily answered.

The Nile for these thirty years has but once so failed as to occasion dearth, but never in that period so as to produce famine in Egypt. The redundance of the water sweeping every thing before it, has thrice been the cause, not of dearth, but of famine and emigration; but carelessness, I believe, hath been, the occasion of both, and very often the malice of the Arabs; for there are in Egypt, from Siout downwards, great remains of ancient works, vast lakes, canals, and large conduits for water, destined by the ancients to keep this river under controul,
serving

serving as reservoirs to supply a scanty year, and as drains, or outlets, to prevent the overabundance of water in wet years, by spreading it in the thirsty sands of Libya to the great advantage of the Arabs, rather than letting it run to waste in the Mediterranean. The mouths of these immense drains being out of repair, in a scanty year, contribute by their evacuation to make it still scantier by not retaining water, and if after a dearth they are well secured, or raised too high, and a wet season follows, they then occasion a destructive inundation.

I hope I have now satisfied the reader, that Egypt was never an arm of the sea, or formed by sediments brought down in the Nile, but that it was created with other parts of the globe at the same time, and for the same purposes; and we are warranted to say this, till we receive from the hand of Providence a work of such imperfection, that its destruction can be calculated from the very means by which it was first formed, and which were the apparent sources of its beauty and pre-eminence. Egypt, like other countries, will perish by the *fiat* of Him that made it, but when, or in what manner, lies hid where it ought to be, inaccessible to the useless, vain inquiries, and idle speculations of man.



C H A P. XVIII.

*Inquiry about the Possibility of changing the Course of
the Nile Cause of the Nuña.*

IT has been thought a problem that merited to be considered, Whether it was possible to turn the current of the Nile into the Red Sea, and thereby to famish Egypt? I think the question should more properly be, Whether the water of the Nile, running into Egypt, could be so diminished, or diverted, that it should never be sufficient to prepare that country for annual cultivation? Now to this it is answered, That there seems to be no doubt but that it is possible, because the Nile, and all the rivers that run into it, and all the rains that swell those rivers, fall into a country fully two miles above the level of the sea; therefore, it cannot be denied, that there is level enough to divert many of the rivers into the Red Sea, the Indian, and Atlantic Oceans, or perhaps, still easier, by turning the course of the river

Abiad

Abiad till it meets the level of the Niger, or pass through the desert into the Mediterranean.

Lalibala, as we have already seen, attempted the former method with great appearance of success; and this prince, to whom the accidental circumstances of the time had given extraordinary powers, and who was otherwise a man of great capacity and resolution, might, if he had persevered, completed his purpose, the thing being possible, that is, no law of nature against it, and all difficulties are only relative to the powers vested in those who are engaged in the undertaking. Alexander the Great would have succeeded—his father Philip would have miscarried—Lewis the XIV. would perhaps have accomplished it, as easily as he united the two seas by the canal of Languedoc, and with the same engineers; but he is the only European prince of whom this could have been expected with any degree of probability.

Alphonso Albuquerque, viceroy of India, is said to have wrote frequently to the king of Portugal, Don Emanuel, to send some pioneers from Madeira, people accustomed to level ground, and prepare it for sugar-canes, with whose assistance he was to execute that enterprize of turning the Nile into the Red Sea, and famishing Egypt. His son mentions this very improbable story in his * father's commentaries; and he says further,

* Alph. d'Albuquerque, Comment. lib. iv. cap. 7.

that

that he imagines it might have been done, because it was a known fact that the Arabs in Upper Egypt, when in rebellion against the Soldan, used to interrupt the course of the canal between Cossair on the Red Sea, and Kenna in Egypt.

Tellez and le Grande, mentioning the two opinions of the father and the son upon this subject, give great praise to the son at the expence of the father, but without reason.

In the first place, we have seen that the utmost exertion Don Emanuel could make was to send 400 men to assist the king of Abyssinia, whose country was then almost conquered by the Turks and Moors. It was not then from India we were to expect the execution of so arduous an undertaking. And as to the second, the younger Albuquerque is mistaken egregiously in point of fact, for there never was a canal between Cossair and Kenna, the goods from the Red Sea were transported by a caravan, and are so yet. We have seen, in the beginning of this work, the account of my travelling thither from Kenna; this intercourse probably was often interrupted by the Arabs in the days he mentions, and so it is still; but it is the caravan not the canal, that is stoppt by the Arabs, for no canal ever existed.

The sum of all this story is, a long and violent persecution followed the conquest of Egypt by the Saracens, who were accustomed to live in tents, which, with their dislike to the Christian churches, made them destroy all the buildings of stone, as
also

also persecute the masons, whom they considered as being employed in the advancement of idolatry : these unhappy workmen, therefore, fled in numbers to Lalibala, an Abyssinian prince of their own religion, who employed them in many stupendous works for diverting the Nile into the Red Sea, or the Indian Ocean, which I have already described, and which exist entire to this day*.

This idea, indeed, had subsisted as long as the royal family lived in the south part of Abyssinia, in Shoa, in the neighbourhood, and sometimes on the very spot where the attempt was made. When the court, however, removed northward, and the princes, no longer confined in Geshen, (a mountain in Amhara) were imprisoned, as they now are in Wechné, in Belessen, near Gondar, these transactions of remote times and places were gradually forgot, and often misrepresented ; though, so far down as the beginning of this century, we find Tecla Haimanout I. † (king of Abyssinia) expostulating by a letter with the basha of Cairo upon the murder of the French envoy M. du Roule, and threatening the Turkish regency, that, if they persisted in such misbehaviour, he would make the Nile the instrument of his vengeance, the keys of which were in his hand, to give them famine or plenty, as they should deserve of him. In my time, no sensible man in Abyssinia

* Vol. I. b. ii. chap. 8.

† See this letter in the life of that prince.

believed

believed that such a thing was possible, and few that it had ever been attempted.

As for the opinion of those, that the Nile may be turned into the Red Sea from Nubia or Egypt, it deserves no answer. What could be the motive of such an undertaking? Would the Egyptians suffer such an operation to be carried on in their own country for the sake of starving themselves? and if the country had been taken from them by an enemy, still it could not be the interest of that conqueror to let the inhabitants, now become his subjects, perish, and much less to reduce them to the necessity of so doing by such an undertaking.

Much has been wrote about a miraculous drop, or dew, called Gotta, or Nueta, which falls in Egypt precisely on St. John's day, and is believed to be the peculiar gift of that saint; it stops the plague, causes dough to leaven, or ferment, and announces a speedy and plentiful inundation.

I hope my reader will not expect that I should enter into the discussion of the part of St. John is thought to have in this event, my business is only with natural causes.

Memphis and Alexandria, and all the ancient cities of Lower Egypt, stand upon cisterns, into which the Nile, upon its overflowing, was admitted, and there remained till it had deposited all its sediment, and became fit for drinking. These cisterns are now full of filth; though in disrepair, the water, when the Nile

is high insinuates itself into them through the broken conduits.

In February and March the sun is on its approach to the zenith of one extremity of Egypt, and of course has a very considerable influence upon the other. The Nile being now fallen low, the water in the cisterns putrifies, and the river itself has lost all its volatile and finer parts by the continued action of a vertical sun; so that, instead of being subject to evaporation, it becomes daily more and more inclined to putrefaction. About St. John's day * it receives a plentiful mixture of the fresh and fallen rain from Ethiopia, which dilutes and refreshes the almost corrupted river, and the sun near at hand exerts its natural influence upon the water, which now is become light enough to be exhaled, though it has still with it a mixture of the corrupted fluid, so that it rises but a small height during the first few days of the inundation, then falls down and returns to the earth in plentiful and abundant dews; and that this is really so, I am persuaded from what I observed myself at Cairo.

My quadrant was placed on the flat roof, or terrass, of a gentleman's house where I was taking observations; I had gone down to supper, and soon after returned, when I found the brass limb of the quadrant covered with small drops of dew, which were turned to a perfect green, or copperas

* In Abyssinia, the 24th of June.

colour;

colour; and this green had so corroded the brass in an hour's time, that the marks remained on the limb of the quadrant for six months; and the cavities made by the corrosion were plainly discernible through a microscope.

It is in February, March, or April only, that the plague begins in Egypt. I do not believe it an endemial disease, I rather think it comes from Constantinople with merchandise, or passengers, and at this time of the year that the air having attained a degree of putridity proper to receive it by the long absence of dews, the infection is thereto joined, and continues to rage till the period I just spoke of, when it is suddenly stopped by the dews occasioned by a refreshing mixture of rain-water, which is poured out into the Nile at the beginning of the inundation.

The first and most remarkable sign of the change brought about in the air is the sudden stopping of the plague at Saint John's day; every person, though shut up from society for months before, buys, sells, and communicates with his neighbour without any sort of apprehension; and it was never known, as far as I could learn upon fair inquiry, that one fell sick of the plague after this anniversary: it will be observed I don't say *died*; there are, I know, examples of that, though I believe but few; the plague is not always a disease that suddenly terminates, it often takes a considerable time to come to a head, appearing only by symptoms; so that people taken ill, by
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the most putrid influence of the air, linger on, struggling with the disease which has already got such hold that they cannot recover; but what I say, and mean is, that no person is taken ill of the plague so as to die after the dew has fallen in June; and no symptoms of the plague are ever commonly seen in Egypt but in those spring months already mentioned, the greater part of which are destitute of moisture.

I think the instance I am going to give, which is universally known, and cannot be denied, brings this so home that no doubt can remain of the origin of this dew, and its powerful effects upon the plague.

The Turks and Moors are known to be predeterminarians; they believe the hour of man's death is so immutably fixed that nothing can either advance or defer it an instant. Secure in this principle, they expose in the market-place, immediately after Saint John's day, the clothes of the many thousands that have died during the late continuance of the plague, all which imbibe the miasmatic air of the evening and the morning, are handled, bought, put on, and worn without any apprehension of danger; and though these consist of furs, cotton, silk, and woollen cloths, which are stuffs the most retentive of the infection, no accident happened to those who wear them from this their happy confidence.

I shall here sum up all that I have to say relating to the river Nile, with a tradition handed down
to

to us by Herodotus, the father of ancient history, upon which moderns less instructed have grafted a number of errors. Herodotus,* says, that he was informed by the secretary of Minerva's treasury, that one half of the water of the Nile flowed due north into Egypt, while the other half took an opposite course, and flowed directly south into Ethiopia.

The secretary was probably of that country himself, and seems by this observation to have known more of it than all the ancients together. In fact, we have seen that, between 13° and 14° N. latitude, the Nile, with all its tributary streams, which have their rise and course within the tropical rains, falls down into the flat country, (the kingdom of Sennaar), which is more than a mile lower than the high country in Abyssinia, and thence, with a little inclination, it runs into Egypt.

Again, in lat. 9° in the kingdom of Genger, the Zebee runs south, or south-east, into the inner Ethiopia, as do also many other rivers, and, as I have heard from the natives of that country, empty themselves into a lake, as those on the north of the Line do into the lake Tzana; thence distribute their waters to the east and to the west. These become the heads of great rivers that run through the interior countries of Ethiopia (corresponding to the sea-coast of Melinda and Momba-

* Herod. lib. ii p. 98. sect. 28.

za) into the Indian Ocean, whilst, on the westward, they are the origin of the vast streams that fall into the Atlantic, passing through Benin and Congo, southward of the river Gambia, and the Sierraleona.

In short, the periodical rains from the tropic of Capricorn to the Line, being in equal quantity with those that fall between the Line and the tropic of Cancer, it is plain, that if the land of Ethiopia sloped equally from the Line southward and northward, half of the rains that fall on each side would go north, and half south, but as the ground from 5° N. declines all southward, it follows that the river which runs to the southward must be equal to those that run to the northward, *plus* the rain that falls in the 5° north latitude, where ground begins to slope to the southward, and there can be little doubt this is at least one of the reasons why there are in the southern continent so many rivers larger than the Nile that run both into the Indian and Atlantic Oceans.

From this very true and sensible relation handed to us by Herodotus, from the authority of the secretary of Minerva, the Nubian geographer has framed a fiction of his own, which is, that the river Nile divides itself into two branches, one of which runs into Egypt northward, and one through the country of the negroes westward, into the Atlantic Ocean. And this opinion has been greedily adopted by M. Ludolf*, who cites the

* Vid. Ludolf in Proemio Hist. Æthiop. 1. 8. Id. lib. i. cap. viii. p. 178. Leo Africanus in descrip. Africa, lib. i. cap. vii. authority

authority of Leo Africanus, and that of his monk Gregory, both of them, in these respects, fully as much mistaken as the Nubian geographer himself. M. Ludolf, after quoting a passage of Pliny, tells us that he had consulted the famous Bochart upon that subject, whether the Nile and the Niger (the river that runs through Nigritia into the Western Ocean) were one and the same river? The famous Bochart answers him peremptorily in the true spirit of a schoolman,—That there is nothing more certain than that the Niger is a part of the river Nile. With great submission, however, I must venture to say there is not the least foundation for this assertion.

Pliny seems the first who gave rise to it, but he speaks modestly upon the subject, giving his reasons as he goes along. “*Nigri fluvio eadem natura, quæ Nilo, calamum & papyrus, & eadem gignit animantes, iisdemque temporibus augefcit.*” * That it has the same soil from which the Nile takes its colour, the water is the same in taste, produces the same reeds, and especially the papyrus; has the same animals in it, such as the crocodile and hippopotamus, and overflows at the same season; this is saying nothing but what may be applied with equal truth to every other river between the northern tropic and the Line; but the other two authors, the Nubian and the monk, assert each of them a direct false-

* Plin. lib. v. cap. 8.

hood. The Nubian says, that if the Nile carried all the rains that fall in Abyssinia down into Egypt, the people would not be safe in their houses. To this I answer by a matter of fact, the map of the whole course of the Nile is before the reader; and it is plain from thence, that the whole rain in Abyssinia must now go, and ever has gone down into Egypt, and yet the people are very safe in their houses, and very seldom is the whole land of Egypt completely overflowed; and it is by no means less certain from the same inspection, that, unless a river as large as the Nile, constantly full, having its rise in countries subject to perpetual rains, and pouring its stream, which never decreases, into that river, as the Abiad does at Halfaia, all the waters in Abyssinia collected in the Nile would not be sufficient to pass its scanty stream through the burning deserts of Nubia and the Barabra, so as it should be of any utility when arrived in Egypt.

The next falsehood in point of fact is that of the monk Gregory, who says that this left branch of the Nile parts from it, after having passed the kingdom of Dongola into Nubia, after which it runs through Elvah, and so down the desert into the Mediterranean, between the Cyrenaicum and Alexandria. Now, first, we know, from the authority of all antiquity, that there is not a desert more destitute of rivers than that of the Thebaid. This want of water (not the distance) made the voyage to the temple of Jupiter Ammon

mon an enterprise next to desperate, and so worthy of Alexander, who never, however, met a river in his way; had there been there such a stream, there could be no doubt that the banks of it would have been fully as well inhabited as those of the Nile, and the Thebaid consequently no desert. Besides the caravans, which for ages passed between Egypt and Sennaar, must have seen this river, and drunk of it; so must the travellers, in the beginning of this century, Poncet and M. du Roule. They were both at Elvah; and, passing through the dreary deserts of Selima, they must have gone along its side, and crossed it, where it parted from the Nile in their journey to Sennaar. Whereas we know they never saw running water from the time they left the Nile at Siout in Egypt, till they fell in again with it at Muscho, during which period they had nothing but well water, which they carried in skins with them.

The district of Elvah is the Oasis Magna and Oasis Parva of the ancients; large plentiful springs breaking out in the middle of the burning sands, and running constantly without diminution, have invited inhabitants to flock around them. These conducting off the water that spills over the fountain by trenches, the neighbouring lands have quickly produced a plentiful vegetation; gardens and verdure are spread on every side, large groves of palm trees have been planted, and the overflowings of every fountain have produced a little paradise,

paradise, like so many beautiful and fruitful islands amidst an immense Ocean.

The coast of the Mediterranean, from the Cyrenaicum or Ptolemaid (that is, the coast from Bengazi, or Derna, to Alexandria) is well known by the shipping of every nation; but what pilot or passenger ever saw this magnificent watering-place in that desert coast, where this branch of the Nile comes down into the Mediterranean? Besides, the author of this fable betrays his ignorance in the very beginning, where he derives this left branch of the Nile from the principal river, and says, that, after passing the kingdom of Dongola, it enters Nubia. Now, when it entered Dongola it must have already passed Nubia, for Dongola is the capital of the Barabra, every inch of which is to the northward of Nubia. I do not know worse guides in the geography of Africa than Leo Africanus and the Nubian geographer. I believe them both impostors, and the commentators upon them have greatly increased by their own conjectures, the confusion and errors which the text has every where occasioned.

As far as I have been ever able to learn, by a very diligent and cautious inquiry, from the inhabitants of the neighbouring countries, I believe the origin of the Niger is in lat. 12° north, and in long. 30° from the meridian of Greenwich nearly; that it is composed of various rivers falling down the sides of very high mountains, called Dyre and Tegla; and runs straight west into the
heart

heart of Africa. I conclude also, that this river (though it has abundant supply from every mountain) is very much diminished by evaporation, running in a long course upon the very limits of the tropical rains, when entire, under the name of Senega; or, perhaps, when divided under those of Senega and Gambia, it loses itself in the Atlantic Ocean. I conceive also, that, as Pliny says, it has the same taste and natural productions with the Nile, because it runs in the same climate, and like that river owes, if not its existence, yet certainly its increase and fulness to the same cause, the tropical rains in the northern hemisphere falling from high mountains.

I hope I have now fully exhausted every subject worthy of inquiry as to the place where the fountains of the Nile are situated, also as to its course and various names, the different countries through which it flows, the true cause, and every thing curious attending its inundations; and that as, in old times, *Caput Nili quærere, to seek the source of the Nile*, was a proverb in use to signify the impossibility of an attempt, it may hereafter be applied, with as much reason, to denote the inutility of any such undertakings.

ry and service would end that day, and another matter, like Needsda Kaa Georgia, was come to make a short stay among them, with a resolution to pay for every labour they were ordered to perform, and purchase all things for ready money: the address was to the military service: he added nothing further to be expected from them, either by the king or Governor of Ilass, nor from their prefect officer, as he had no authority. We found

C H A P. XIX.
Kind reception among the Agows—Their Number, Trade, Character, &c.

AFTER having given my reader so long, tho' I hope, no unentertaining lecture, it is time to go back to Woldo, whom we had left settling our reception with the chief of the village of Geesh. We found the measures taken by this man such as convinced us at once of his capacity and attachment. The miserable Agows, assembled all around him, were too much interested in the appearance we made, not to be exceedingly inquisitive how long our stay was to be among them. They saw, by the horse driven before us, we belonged to Fasil, and suspected, for the same reason, that they were to maintain us, or, in other words, that we should live at discretion upon them as long as we chose to tarry there; but Woldo, with great address, had dispelled these fears almost as soon as they were formed. He informed them of the king's grant to me of the village of Geesh; that Fasil's tyranny

ny and avarice would end that day, and another master, like Negadé Ras Georgis, was come to pass a chearful time among them, with a resolution to pay for every labour they were ordered to perform, and purchase all things for ready money: he added, moreover, that no military service was further to be exacted from them, either by the king or governor of Damot, nor from their present master, as he had no enemies. We found these news had circulated with great rapidity, and we met with a hearty welcome upon our arrival at the village.

Woldo had asked a house from the Shum, who very civilly had granted me his own; it was just large enough to serve me, but we were obliged to take possession of four or five others, and we were scarcely settled in these when a servant arrived from Fasil to intimate to the Shum his surrender of the property and sovereignty of Geesh to me, in consequence of a grant from the king: he brought with him a fine, large, milk-white cow, two sheep, and two goats; the sheep and goats I understood were from Welleta Yafous. Fasil sent us six jars of hydromel, fifty wheat loaves of very excellent bread, and to this Welleta Yafous had added two middle-sized horns of excellent strong spirits. Our hearts were now perfectly at ease, and we passed a very merry evening. Strates, above all, endeavoured, with many a bumper of the good hydromel of Buré, to subdue the devil which he had swallowed in the enchanted water.

Woldo,

Woldo, who had done his part to great perfection, and had reconciled the minds of all the people of the village to us, had a little apprehension for himself; he thought he had lost credit with me, and therefore employed the servant of Aylo Aylo to desire me not to speak of the fash to Fasil's servant. I assured him, that, as long as I saw him acting properly, as he now did, it was much more probable I should give him another fash on our return, than complain of the means he had used to get this last. This entirely removed all his fears, and indeed as long after as he was with us, he every day deserved more and more our commendations.

Before we went to bed I satisfied Fasil's servant, who had orders from Welleta Yafous to return immediately; and, as he saw we did not spare the liquor that he brought us, he promised to send a fresh supply as soon as he returned home, which he did not fail to perform the day after.

Woldo was now perfectly happy; he had no superior or spy over his actions; he had explained himself to the Shum, that we should want somebody to buy necessaries to make bread for us, and to take care of the management of our house. We displayed our lesser articles for barter to the Shum, and told him the most considerable purchases, such as oxen and sheep, were to be paid in gold. He was struck with the appearance of our wealth, and the generosity of our proposals, and told Woldo that he insisted, since we were in his houses,

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we would take his daughters for our house-keepers. The proposal was a most reasonable one, and readily accepted. He accordingly sent for three in an instant, and we delivered them their charge. The eldest took it upon her readily, she was about sixteen years of age, of a stature above the middle size, but she was remarkably genteel, and, colour apart, her features would have made her a beauty in any country in Europe; she was, besides, very sprightly; we understood not one word of her language, though she comprehended very easily the signs that we made. This nymph of the Nile was called by nick-name Irepone, which signifies some animal that destroys mice, but whether of the ferret or snake kind I could not perfectly understand; sometimes it was one and sometimes another, but which it was I thought of no great importance.

The first and second day, after disposing of some of our stock in purchases, she thought herself obliged to render us an account, and give back the residue at night to Woldo, with a protestation that she had not stolen or kept any thing to herself. I looked upon this regular accounting as an ungenerous treatment of our benefactress. I called on Woldo, and made him produce a parcel that contained the same with the first commodities we had given her; this consisted of beads, antimony, small scissars, knives, and large needles; I then brought out a packet of the same that had not been broken, and told her they were intended

ed to be distributed among her friends, and that we expected no account from her; on the contrary, that, after she had bestowed these, to buy us necessaries, and for any purposes she pleased, I had still as many more to leave her at parting, for the trouble she had given herself. I often thought the head of the little savage would have turned with the possession of so much riches, and so great confidence, and it was impossible to be so blinded, as not to see that I had already made great progress in her affections. To the number of trifles I had added one ounce of gold, value about fifty shillings sterling, which I thought would defray our expences all the time we staid; and having now perfectly arranged the oeconomy of our family, nothing remained but to make the proper observations.

The houses are all of clay and straw. There was no place for fixing my clock; I was therefore obliged to employ a very excellent watch made for me by Elicott. The dawn now began, and a few minutes afterwards every body was at their doors; all of them crowded to see us, and we breakfasted in public with very great chearfulness. The white cow was killed, and every one invited to his share of her. The Shum, priest of the river, should likewise have been of the party, but he declined either sitting or eating with us, though his sons were not so scrupulous.

It is upon the principal fountain and altar, already mentioned, that once a-year, on the first appearance

pearance of the dog-star, (or, as others say, eleven days after) this priest assembles the heads of the clans; and having sacrificed a black heifer that never bore a calf, they plunge the head of it into this fountain, they then wrap it up in its own hide, so as no more to be seen, after having sprinkled the hide within and without with water from the fountain. The carcase is then split in half, and cleaned with extraordinary care; and, thus prepared, it is laid upon the hillock over the first fountain, and washed all over with its water, while the elders, or considerable people, carry water in their hands joined (it must not be in any dish) from the two other fountains; they then assemble upon the small hill a little west of St. Michael, (it used to be the place where the church now stands) there they divide the carcase into pieces corresponding to the number of the tribes, and each tribe has its privilege, or pretensions, to particular parts, which are not in proportion to the present consequence of the several clans. Geesh has a principal slice, though the most inconsiderable territory of the whole; Sacala has the next; and Zeegam, the most considerable of them all in power and riches, has the least of the whole. I found it in vain to ask upon what rules this distribution was founded; their general and constant answer was, it was so observed in old times.

After having ate this carcase raw, according to their custom, and drunk the Nile water to the exclusion of any other liquor, they pile up the bones

on the place where they sit, and burn them to ashes. This used to be performed where the church now stands; but Kas Sela Christos, some time after, having beaten the Agows, and desirous, at the Jesuits instigation, to convert them to Christianity, he demolished their altar where the bones were burnt, and built a church upon the site, the doors of which, I believe, were never opened since that reign, nor is there now, as far as we could perceive, any Christian there who might wish to see it frequented. After Sela Christos had demolished their altar by building this church, they ate the carcase, and burnt the bones, on the top of the mountain of Geesh out of the way of profanation, where the vestiges of this ceremony may yet be seen; but probably the fatigue attending this, and the great indifference their late governors have had for Christianity, have brought them back to a small hillock by the side of the marsh, west of St Michael's church, and a little to the southward, where they perform this solemnity every year, and they will probably resume their first altar when the church is fallen to ruins, which they are every day privately hastening.

After they have finished their bloody banquet, they carry the head, close wrapt from sight in the hide, into the cavern, which they say reaches below the fountains, and there, by a common light, without torches, or a number of candles, as denoting a solemnity, they perform their worship,
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the particulars of which I could never learn ; it is a piece of free-masonry, which every body knows, and no body ventures to reveal. At a certain time of the night they leave the cave, but at what time, or by what rule, I could not learn ; neither would they tell me what became of the head, whether it was ate, or buried, or how consumed. The Abyssinians have a story, probably created by themselves, that the devil appears to them, and with him they ate the head, swearing obedience to him upon certain conditions, that of sending rain, and a good season for their bees and cattle : however this may be, it is certain that they pray to the spirit residing in the river, whom they call the Everlasting God, Light of the World, Eye of the World, God of Peace, their Saviour, and Father of the Universe.

Our landlord, the Shum, made no scruple of reciting his prayers for seasonable rain, for plenty of grass, for the preservation of serpents, at least of one kind of this reptile ; he also deprecated thunder in these prayers, which he pronounced very pathetically with a kind of tone or song : he called the river “ Most High God, Saviour of the world ;” of the other words I could not well judge, but by the interpretation of Woldo. Those titles, however, of divinity which he gave the river, I could perfectly comprehend without an interpreter, and for these only I am a voucher.

I asked the priest, into whose good graces I had purposely insinuated myself, if ever any spirit had

been seen by him? He answered, without hesitation, Yes; very frequently. He said he had seen the spirit of the evening of the 3d, (just as the sun was setting) under a tree, which he shewed me at a distance, who told him of the death of a son, and also that a party from Fasil's army was coming; that, being afraid, he consulted his serpent, who ate readily and heartily, from which he knew no harm was to befall him from us. I asked him if he could prevail on the spirit to appear to me? He said he could not venture to make this request. If he thought he would appear to me, if, in the evening, I sat under that tree alone? he said he believed not. He said he was of a very graceful figure and appearance; he thought rather older than middle age; but he seldom chose to look at his face; he had a long white beard, his cloaths not like theirs, of leather, but like silk, of the fashion of the country. I asked how he was certain it was not a man? he laughed, or rather sneered, shaking his head, and saying, No, no; it is no man, but a spirit. I asked him then what spirit he thought it was? he said it was *of the river*, it was God, the Father of mankind; but I never could bring him to be more explicit. I then desired to know why he prayed against thunder. He said, because it was hurtful to the bees, their great revenue being honey and wax: then, why he prayed for serpents? he replied, Because they taught him the coming of good or evil. It seems they have all several of these creatures in their neighbour-

neighbourhood, and the richer sort always in their houses, whom they take care of, and feed before they undertake a journey, or any affair of consequence. They take this animal from his hole, and put butter and milk before him, of which he is extravagantly fond; if he does not eat, they think ill-fortune is near at hand.

Nanna Georgis, chief of the Agows of Banja, a man of the greatest consideration at Gondar, both with the king and Ras Michael, and my particular friend, as I had kept him in my house, and attended him in his sickness, after the campaign of 1769, confessed to me his apprehensions that he should die, because the serpent did not eat upon his leaving his house to come to Gondar. He was, indeed, very ill of the low country fever, and very much alarmed; but he recovered, and returned home, by Ras Michael's order, to gather the Agows together against Waragna Fasil; which he did, and soon after, he and other seven chiefs of the Agows were slain at the battle of Banja; so here the serpent's warning was verified by a second trial, though it failed in the first.

Before an invasion of the Galla, or an inroad of the enemy, they say these serpents disappear, and are no where to be found. Fasil, the sagacious and cunning governor of the country, was, as it was said, greatly addicted to this species of divination, in so much as never to mount his horse, or go from home, if an animal of this kind, which he had in his keeping, refused to eat.

The Shum's name was Keffa Abay, or Servant of the river ; he was a man about 70, not very lean, but infirm, fully as much so as might have been expected from that age. He conceived that he might have had eighty-four or eighty-five children. That honourable charge which he possessed had been in his family from the beginning of the world, as he imagined. Indeed, if all his predecessors had as numerous families as he, there was no probability of the succession devolving to strangers. He had a long white beard, and very moderately thick ; an ornament rare in Abyssinia, where they have seldom any hair upon their chin. He had round his body a skin wrapt and tied with a broad belt : I should rather say it was an ox's hide ; but it was so scraped, and rubbed, and manufactured, that it was of the consistence and appearance of shamoy, only browner in colour. Above this he wore a cloak with the hood up, and covering his head ; he was bare-legged, but had sandals, much like those upon ancient statues ; these, however, he put off as soon as ever he approached the bog where the Nile rises, which we were all likewise obliged to do. We were allowed to drink the water, but make no other use of it. None of the inhabitants of Geesh wash themselves, or their cloaths, in the Nile, but in a stream that falls from the mountain of Geesh down into the plain of Affoa, which runs south, and meets the Nile in its turn northward, passing the country of the Gafats and Gongas.

The Agows, in whose country the Nile rises are, in point of number, one of the most considerable nations in Abyssinia; when their whole force is raised, which seldom happens, they can bring to the field 4000 horse, and a great number of foot; they were, however, once much more powerful; several unsuccessful battles, and the perpetual inroads of the Galla, have much diminished their strength. The country, indeed, is still full of inhabitants, but from their history we learn, that one clan, called Zeegam, maintained singly a war against the king himself, from the time of Socinios to that of Yafous the Great, who, after all, overcame them by surprise and stratagem; and that another clan, the Denguis, in like manner maintained the war against Facilidas, Hannes I. and Yafous II. all of them active princes. Their riches, however, are still greater than their power, for though their province in length is no where 60 miles, nor half that in breadth, yet Gondar and all the neighbouring country depend for the necessaries of life, cattle, honey, butter, wheat, hides, wax, and a number of such articles, upon the Agows, who come constantly in succession, a thousand and fifteen hundred at a time, loaded with those commodities, to the capital.

As the dependence upon the Agows is for their produce rather than on the forces of their country, it has been a maxim with wise princes to compound with them for an additional tribute, instead of their military service; the necessities of the times have

sometimes altered these wise regulations, and between their attachment to Fasil, and afterwards to Ras Michael, they have been very much reduced, whereby the state hath suffered.

It will naturally occur, that, in a long carriage, such as that of a hundred miles in such a climate, butter must melt, and be in a state of fusion, consequently very near putrefaction; this is prevented by the root of an herb, called Moc-moco, yellow in colour, and in shape nearly resembling a carrot; this they bruise and mix with their butter, and a very small quantity preserves it fresh for a considerable time; and this is a great saving and convenience, for, supposing salt was employed, it is very doubtful if it would answer the intention; besides, salt is a money in this country, being circulated in the form of wedges, or bricks; it serves the purpose of silver coin, and is the change of gold; so that this herb is of the utmost use in preventing the increase in price of this necessary article, which is the principal food of all ranks of people in this country. Brides paint their feet likewise from the ankle downwards, as also their nails and palms of their hands, with this drug. I brought with me into Europe a large quantity of the seed resembling that of coriander, and dispersed it plentifully through all the royal gardens: whether it has succeeded or not I cannot say.

Besides the market of Gondar, the neighbouring black savages, the woolly-headed Shangalla, purchase the greatest part of these commodities from them, and

many others, which they bring from the capital when they return thence; they receive in exchange elephants teeth, rhinoceros horns, gold in small pellets, and a quantity of very fine cotton; of which goods they might receive a much greater quantity were they content to cultivate trade in a fair way, without making inroads upon these savages for the sake of slaves, and thereby disturbing them in their occupations of seeking for gold and hunting the elephant.

The way this trade, though very much limited, is established, is by two nations sending their children mutually to each other; there is then peace between those two families which have such hostages; these children often intermarry; after which that family is understood to be protected, and at peace, perhaps, for a generation: but such instances are rare, the natural propensity of both nations being to theft and plunder; into these they always relapse; mutual enmity follows in consequence.

The country of the Agows, called Agow Midrè, from its elevation, must be of course temperate and wholesome; the days, indeed, are hot, even at Sacala, and, when exposed to the sun, we are sensible of a scorching heat; but whenever you are seated in the shade, or in a house, the temperature is cool, as there is a constant breeze which makes the sun tolerable even at mid-day, though we are here but 10° from the Line, or a few minutes more.

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Though these Agows are so fortunate in their climate, they are not said to be long-livers ; but their precise age is very difficult to ascertain to any degree of exactness, as they have no fixed or known epoch to refer to ; and, though their country abounds with all the necessaries of life, their taxes, tributes, and services, especially at present, are so multiplied upon them, whilst their distresses of late have been so great and frequent, that they are only the manufacturers of the commodities they sell, to satisfy these constant exorbitant demands, and cannot enjoy any part of their own produce themselves, but live in misery and penury scarce to be conceived. We saw a number of women, wrinkled and sun-burnt so as scarce to appear human, wandering about under a burning sun, with one and sometimes two children upon their back, gathering the seeds of bent grass to make a kind of bread.

The cloathing of the Agows is all of hides, which they soften and manufacture in a method peculiar to themselves, and this they wear in the rainy season, when the weather is cold, for here the rainy seasons are of long duration, and violent, which still increase the nearer you approach the Line, for the reasons I have already assigned. The younger sort are chiefly naked, the married women carrying their children about with them upon their backs ; their cloathing is like a shirt down to their feet, and girded with a belt or girdle about their middle ; the lower part of it
resembles

resembles a large double petticoat, one ply of which they turn back over their shoulders, fastening it with a broach, or skewer, across their breast before, and carry their children in it behind. The women are generally thin, and, like the men, below the middle size. There is no such thing as barrenness known among them. They begin to bear children before eleven; they marry generally about that age, and are marriageable two years before: they close child-bearing before they are thirty, though there are several instances to the contrary.

Dengui, Sacala, Dengla, and Geesh, are all called by the name of Ancasha, and their tribute is paid in honey. Quaquera and Azena pay honey likewise; Banja, honey and gold; Metakel gold; Zeegam, gold. There comes from Dengla a particular kind of sheep, called Macoot, which are said to be of a breed brought from the southward of the Line; but neither sheep, butter, nor slaves make part of their tribute, being reserved for presents to the king and great men.

Besides what they sell, and what they pay to the governor of Damot, the Agows have a particular tribute which they present to the king, one thousand dabra of honey, each dabra containing about sixty pounds weight, being a large earthen vessel. They pay, moreover, fifteen hundred oxen and 1000 ounces of gold: formerly the number of jars of honey was four thousand, but several of these

these villages being daily given to private people by the king, the quantity is diminished by the quota so alienated. The butter is all sold; and, since the fatal battle of Banja, the king's share comes only to about one thousand jars. The officer that keeps the accounts, and sees the rents paid, is called Agow Miziker *; his post is worth one thousand ounces of gold; and by this it may be judged with what œconomy this revenue is collected. This post is generally the next to the governor of Damot, but not of course; they are separate provinces, and united only by the special grant of the king.

Although I had with me two large tents sufficient for my people, I was advised to take possession of the houses to secure our mules and horses from thieves in the night, as also from the assaults of wild beasts, of which this country is full. Almost every small collection of houses has behind it a large cave, or subterraneous dwelling, dug in the rock, of a prodigious capacity, and which must have been the work of great labour. It is not possible, at this distance of time, to say whether these caverns were the ancient habitation of the Agows when they were Troglodytes, or whether they were intended for retreats upon any alarm of an irruption of the Galla into their country.

At the same time I must observe, that all the clans, or districts of the Agows, have the whole

* Accountant of the Agows.

mountains of their country perforated in caves like these; even the clans of Zeegam and Quaquera, the first of which from its power arising from the populous state of the country, and the number of horses it breeds, seems to have no reason to fear the irregular invasions of naked and ill-armed savages such as are the Galla. The country of Zeegam, however, which has but few mountains, hath many of these caverns, one range above another, in every mountain belonging to them. Quaquera, indeed, borders upon the Shangalla; as these are all foot, perfectly contiguous, and separated by the river, the caverns were probably intended as retreats for cattle and women against the attacks of those barbarians, which were every minute to be apprehended.

In the country of the Tcheratz Agow, the mountains are all excavated like these in Damot, although they have no Galla for their neighbours whose invasions they need be afraid of. Lalibala, indeed, their great king and saint, about the twelfth century, converted many of these caves into churches, as if he had considered them as formerly the receptacles of Pagan superstition. At the same time, it is not improbable that these caverns were made use of for religious purposes; that of Geesh, for instance, was probably, in former times, a place of secret worship paid to the river, because of that use it still is, not only to the inhabitants of the village, but to the assembly of the clans in general, who, after the ceremonies

ceremonies I have already spoken of, retire, and then perform their sacred ceremonies, to which none but the heads of families in the Agows country are ever admitted.

When I shewed our landlord, Kefla Abay, the dog-star, (Syrius) he knew it perfectly, saying it was Seir, it was the star of the river, the messenger or star of the convocation of the tribes, or of the feast; but I could not observe he ever prayed to it, or looked at it otherwise than one does to a dial, nor mentioned it with the respect he did the Abay; nor did he shew any sort of attention to the planets, or to any other star whatsoever.

On the 9th of November, having finished my memorandum relating to these remarkable places, I traced again on foot the whole course of this river from its source to the plain of Goutto. I was unattended by any one, having with me only two hunting dogs, and my gun in my hand. The quantity of game of all sorts, especially the deer kind, was, indeed, surprising; but though I was, as usual, a very successful sportsman, I was obliged for want of help, to leave each deer where he fell. They sleep in the wild oats, and do not rise till you are about to tread upon them, and then stare at you for half a minute before they attempt to run off.

The only mention I shall make of the natural productions of this place comes the more properly in here, as it relates to my account of the religion of this people. In the writings of the Jesuits,
the

the Agows are said to worship *canes**; but of this I could find no traces among them. I saw no plant of this kind in their whole country, excepting some large bamboo-trees. This plant, in the Agows language, is called Kribaha. It grows in great quantity upon the sides of the precipice of Geesh, and helps to conceal the cavern we have already mentioned; but though we cut several pieces of these canes, they shewed no sort of emotion, nor to be the least interested in what we were doing.

Our business being now done, nothing remained but to depart. We had passed our time in perfect harmony; the address of Woldo, and the great attachment of our friend Irepone, had kept our house in a cheerful abundance. We had lived, it is true, too magnificently for philosophers, but neither idly nor riotously; and I believe never will any *sovereign* of Geesh be again so popular, or reign over his subjects with greater mildness. I had practised medicine gratis, and killed, for three days successively, a cow each day for the poor and the neighbours. I had cloathed the high priest of the Nile from head to foot, as also his two sons, and had decorated two of his daughters with beads of all the colours of the rainbow, adding every other little present they seemed fond of, or that we thought would be agreeable. As for our amiable Irepone, we

* See a very remarkable letter of Ras Scla Christos to the emperor Socinios, in Balthazar Tellez, tom. 2. p. 496.

had

had reserved for her the choicest of our presents, the most valuable of every article we had with us, and a large proportion of every one of them; we gave her, besides some gold; but she, more generous and nobler in her sentiments than us, seemed to pay little attention to these that announced to her the separation from her friend; she tore her fine hair, which she had every day before braided in a newer and more graceful manner; she threw herself upon the ground in the house, and refused to see us mount on horseback, or take our leave, and came not to the door till we were already set out, then followed us with her good wishes and her eyes as far as she could see or be heard.

I took my leave of Kessa Abay, the venerable priest of the most famous river in the world, who recommended me with great earnestness to the care of his god, which, as Strates humorously enough observed, meant nothing less than he hoped the devil would take me. All the young men in the village, with lances and shields, attended us to Saint Michael Sacala, that is, to the borders of their country, and end of my little sovereignty.

B O O K VII.

**RETURN FROM THE SOURCE OF THE NILE TO GONDAR
—TRANSACTIONS THERE—BATTLE OF SERERAXOS,
AND ITS CONSEQUENCES—THE AUTHOR PREPARES
TO LEAVE ABYSSINIA.**

C H A P. XX.

***Return from the Source of the Nile by Maitse—
Come to the House of Welled Amlac—Reception
there—Pass the Nile at Delakus—Arrive at Gon-
dar.***

IT was on the 10th of November 1770 we left
Geesh in our return to Gondar, and passed the
Abay, as before, under the church of Saint
Michael Sacala. We descended the hill through
the wood, crossed the river Davola, and that night
halted at a few huts called Dembea, on the north-
east side of the entrance of a valley.

On

On the 11th we continued our journey in our former road, till we arrived at the church of Abbo; we then turned to the right, our course N. by E. and at three quarters past nine rested under the mountain on the right of the valley; our road lay still through Goutto, but the country here is neither so well inhabited nor so pleasant as the west side of the Nile. At eleven, going N. N. E. we passed the church of Tzion, about an eighth part of a mile distant to E. N. E.; we here have a distinct view of the valley through which runs the Jemma, deep, wide, and full of trees, which continue up the sides of the mountains Amid Amid. At a quarter past eleven we passed a small stream coming from the west, and at twelve another very dangerous river called Utchmi, the ford of which is in the midst of two cataracts, and the stream very rapid; after passing this river, we entered a narrow road in the midst of brushwood, pleasant and agreeable, and full of a kind of foxes * of a bright gold colour. At three quarters past one we halted at the house of Shalaka Welled Alac, with whom I was well acquainted at Gondar; his house is called Welled Abea Abbo, from a church of Abbo about an eighth part of a mile distant.

* I suppose this to be the animal called *Lupus Aureus*; it is near as large as a wolf, and lives upon moles.

I have deferred, till the present occasion, the introducing of this remarkable character to my reader, that I might not trouble him to go back to past transactions that are not of consequence enough to interrupt the thread of my narrative. Soon after I had seen part of the royal family, that had been infected with the small-pox, happily recovered, and was settled at Koscam in a house of my own, formerly belonging to Basba Eusebius, my friend Ayto Aylo recommended to my care a man from Maitsha, with two servants, one of whom, with his master, had been taken ill of the intermitting fever. As I was supplied plentifully with every necessary by the Iteghé, the only inconvenience that I suffered by this was, that of bringing a stranger and a disease into my family. But as I was in a strange country, and every day stood in need of the assistance of the people in it, it was necessary that I should do my part, and make myself as useful as possible when the opportunity came in my way. I therefore submitted, and according to Ayto Aylo's desire, received my two patients with the best grace possible; and the rather, as I was told that he was one of the most powerful, resolute, and best-attended robbers in all Maitsha; that he lay directly in my way to the source of the Nile; and that, under his protection, I might bid defiance to Woodage Asahel, considered as the great obstacle to my making that journey.

The

The servant was a poor, timid wretch, exceedingly afraid of dying. He adhered strictly to his regimen, and very soon recovered. It was not so with Welled Amlac; he had, as I said, another servant, who never, that I saw, came within the door; but as often as I was out attending my other patients, or with the Iteghé, which was great part of the morning, he stole a visit to his master, and brought him as much raw meat, hydromel, and spirits, as, more than once, threw him into a fever and violent delirium. Luckily I was early informed of this by the servant that was recovered, and who did not doubt but this was to end in his master's death, as it very probably might have done; but by the interposition of Ayto Aylo and the Iteghé, we got the unworthy subject banished to Maitsha, so that Welled Amlac remained attended by the servant who had been sick with him, and was to be trusted.

Not to trouble the reader with uninteresting particulars, Shalaka Welled Amlac at last recovered after several weeks illness. When he first came to my house he was but very indifferently clothed, which, in a sick man, was a thing not to be remarked. As he had no change of raiment, his cloaths naturally grew worse during the time he staid with me; and, indeed, he was a very beggarly sight when his disease had entirely left him. One evening, when I was remarking that he could not go home without kissing the ground before the Iteghé, he said, Surely not, and

and he was ready to go whenever I should think proper to bring him his cloaths. I understood at first from this, that he might have brought some change of cloaths, and delivered them into my servant's custody; but, upon farther explanation, I found he had not a rag but those upon his back; and he told me plainly, that he had much rather stay in my house all his life, than be so disgraced before the world, as to leave it after so long a stay, without my first having clothed him from head to foot; asking me, with much confidence, What signifies your curing me, if you turn me out of your house like a beggar?

I still thought there was something of jest in this; and meeting Ayto Aylo that day at Koscum, I told him, laughing, of the conversation that had passed, and was answered gravely, "There is no doubt you must cloath him; to be sure it is the custom." "And his servant, too?" said I. "Certainly, his servant too; and if he had ten servants that ate and drank at your house, you must cloath them all." "I think, said I, Ayto Aylo, a physician at this rate had much better let his patients die than recover them at his own expence." "Yagoube, says Aylo, I see this is not a custom in your country, but it is invariably one in this: it is not so among the lower set of people; but if you will pass here as a man of some degree of consequence, you cannot avoid this without making Welled Amlac your enemy: the man is opulent; it is not for the

value of the cloaths, but he thinks his importance among his neighbours is measured by the respect shewn him by people afar off; never fear, he will make you some kind of return, and for the cloaths I shall pay for them." "By no means, said I, my good friend; I think the anecdote and custom is so curious that it is worth the price of the cloaths; and I beg that you would believe, that, intending to go through Maitsha, I consider it as a piece of friendship in you to have brought me under this obligation." "And so it is, says he: I knew you would think so; you are a cool dispassionate man, and walk by advice, and do not break through the customs of the country, and this reconciles even bad men to you every day, and so much the longer shall you be in safety."

The reader will not doubt that I immediately fulfilled my obligation to Welled Amlac, who received his cloaths, a girdle, and a pair of sandals, in all to the amount of about two guineas, with the same indifference as if he had been buying them for ready money. He then asked for his servant's cloaths, which were ready for him. He only said he thought they were too good, and hinted as if he should take them for his own use when he went to Maitsha. I then carried him new-dressed to the Iteghé, who gave him strict injunctions to take care of me if ever I should come into his hands. He after went home with
Ayto

Ayto Aylo, nor did I ever know what was become of him till now, when we arrived at his house at Welled Abea Abbo, unless from some words that fell in discourse from Fafil at Bamba.

Shalaka Welled Amlac was, however, from home, but his wife, mother, and sisters, received us kindly, knowing us by report; and, without waiting for our landlord, a cow was instantly slaughtered.

The venerable mistress of this worthy family, Welled Amlac's mother, was a very stout, chearful woman, and bore no signs of infirmity or old age: his wife was, on the contrary, as arrant a hag as ever acted the part on the stage: very active, however, and civil, and speaking very tolerable Amharic. His two sisters, about sixteen or seventeen, were really handsome; but Fafil's wife, who was there, was the most beautiful and graceful of them all; she seemed not to be past eighteen, tall, thin, and of a very agreeable carriage and manners. The features of her face were very regular; she had fine eyes, mouth, and teeth, and dark-brown complexion; at first sight a cast of melancholy seemed to hang upon her countenance, but this soon vanished, and she became very courteous, chearful, and most conversible of the whole, or at least seemed to wish to be so; for, unfortunately, she spoke not a word of any language but Galla, though she understood a little Amharic; our conversation did not fail

to give great entertainment to the whole family and for her part she laughed beyond all measure.

The two sisters had been out helping my servants in disposing the baggage; but when they had pitched my tent, and were about to lay the mattresses for sleeping on, the eldest of these interrupted them, and not being able to make herself understood by the Greeks, she took it up and threw it out of the tent-door, whilst no abuse or opprobrious names were spared by my servants; one of whom came to tell me her impudence, and that if they understood her, she said I was to sleep with her this night, and they believed we were got into a house of thieves and murderers. To this I answered by a sharp reproof, desiring them to conform to every thing the family ordered them. I saw the fair nymph was in a violent passion; she told her tale to the matrons with great energy, and a volubility of tongue past imagination, and they all laughed. Fasil's wife called me to sit by her, and began to instruct me, droll enough, as they do children, but of what she said I had not the smallest guess. I endeavoured always to repeat her last words, and this occasioned another vehement laugh, in which I joined as heartily as any, to keep up the joke, for the benefit of the company, as long as possible.

Immediately after this Welled Amlac arrived, and brought us the disagreeable news, that it was impossible to proceed to the ford of the Abay, as two of the neighbouring Shums were at variance
I about

about their respective districts, and in a day or two would decide it by blows. The faces of all our companions fell at these news; but as I knew the man it gave me little trouble, as I supposed the meaning to be, that, if we made it worth while, he would accompany us himself, and in that case we should pass without fear; at any rate, I well knew that, after the obligations I had laid him under at Gondar, he could not, consistent with the received usages of the country, if it was but for his own reputation's sake, fail in receiving me in the very best manner in his power, and entertaining me to the utmost all the time I was in his house.

Satisfied that I understood him, he put on the most chearful countenance: another cow was killed, great plenty of hydromel produced, and he prepared to regale us as sumptuously as possible, after the manner of the country. We were there as often before, obliged to overcome our repugnance to eating raw flesh. Shalaka Welled Amlac set us the example, entertained us with the stories of his hunting elephants, and feats in the last wars, mostly roguish ones. The room where we were (which was indeed large; and contained himself, mother, wife, sisters, his sisters, his horses, mules, and servants, night and day) was all hung round with the trunks of these elephants, which he had brought from the neighbouring Kolla, near Guesgué, and killed with his own hands, for he was one of the bold-
est

est and best horsemen in Abyssinia, and perfectly master of his arms.

This Polyphemus's feast being finished, the horn of hydromel went briskly about. Welled Amlac's eldest sister, whose name was Melectanea, took a particular charge of me, and I began to find the necessity of retiring and going to bed while I was able. Here the former story came over again; the invariable custom of all Maitsha and the country of the Galla, of establishing a relationship by sleeping with a near of kin, was enlarged upon; and, as the young lady herself was present, and presented every horn of drink during this polite dispute concerning her person, I do not know whether it will not be thought a greater breach of delicacy to have refused than to have complied:—

But what success Vanessa met
Is to the world a secret yet;
Can never to mankind be told,
Nor shall the conscious muse unfold.

Eye upon the conscious muse, says lord Orrery, and eye, too, say I:—a man of honour and gallantry should not permit himself such a hint as this, though the Red Sea was between him and his mistress.

It was impossible to sleep; the whole night was one continued storm of thunder, rain, and lightning; the morning was clearer, and my people very urgent to go away; but I had still to settle with Zor Woldo, who had been kept by his mistress,

trefs, Fafil's wife, notwithstanding his master's orders, till he had told her the whole circumstances of our expedition, and made her laugh heartily at the oddity of our sentiments and customs. This she repaid to him by plentiful horns of mead and bouza, as also collops of raw meat, which made him a very eloquent historian; whether or no he was a faithful one, I cannot possibly judge.

After having settled with him to his perfect satisfaction, and cancelled entirely the memory of some disagreeable things past, he consigned us very solemnly to Ayto Aylo's servant, in presence of Welled Amlac, and had taken his leave, when a very fine white cow was brought to the door of the tent from Fafil's wife, who insisted, as a friend of her husband, that I would stay that day for her sake; and I should either learn her my language, or she would teach me Galla. The party was accepted as soon as offered; the morning was fresh and cool, nor had last night's libation any way disordered my stomach. Strates himself, though afraid of Welled Amlac, and exceedingly exasperated at the impudent behaviour, as he called it, of Melectanea, was, however, a little pacified at the approach of the white cow. Brother, says he to Michael, we have nothing to do with people's manners as long as they are civil to us: as to this house, there is no doubt but the men are robbers and murderers, and their women wh—es; but if they use us well while we are now here, and we
are

are so lucky as to get to Gondar alive, let the devil take me if ever I seek again to be at Welled Abea Abbo. It was agreed to relax that day, and dedicate it to herborizing, as also to the satisfying the curiosity of our female friends, by answering all their questions; and thus the forenoon passed as agreeable as possible.

Welled Amlac, a great hunter, had gone with me early to a neighbouring thicket on horseback, armed with lances in search of venison, though we certainly did not want provisions. We in a few minutes raised two bohur, a large animal of the deer kind, and each pursued his beast; mine had not run 400 yards before I overtook him, and pierced him with my pike; and the same would have happened probably to the other, had not Welled Amlac's horse put his fore-feet into a fox's hole, which threw him and his rider headlong to the ground; he was not, however, hurt, but rose very gravely, and desired me to return; it being a rule among these people, never to persist when any thing unfortunate falls out in the beginning of a day.

Our company was now increased by our former landlord at Goutto, where we were obliged to Woldo's stratagem for discovering the cow that was hid. We sat down cheerfully to dinner. Welled Amlac's fall had not spoiled his appetite; I think he ate equal to four ordinary men. I, for the most part, ate the venison, which was made into an excellent dish, only too much stuffed

fed with all kinds of spices. Fafil's wife alone seemed to have a very poor appetite, notwithstanding her violent fits of laughter, and outward appearance of chearfulness. A melancholy gloom returned upon her beautiful face, that seemed to indicate a mind not at ease. She was of a noble family of Galla, which had conquered and settled in the low country of Narea. I wondered that Fafil her husband had not carried her to Gondar. She said her husband had twenty other wives besides her, but took none of them to Gondar; which was a place of war, where it was the custom to marry the wives of their enemies that they had forced to fly, Fafil will be married therefore to Michael's wife, Ozoro Esther. I could not help being startled at this declaration, remembering that I was here losing my time, and forgetting my word of returning as soon as possible; but we had, for many months, lived in such constant alarms, that it was absolutely as needful to seize the moment in which we could repose our mind, as to give rest to the body.

In the afternoon we distributed our presents among the ladies. Fafil's wife was not forgot; and the beautiful Melectanea was covered with beads, handkerchiefs, and ribbands of all colours. Fafil's wife, on my first request, gave me a lock of her fine hair from the root, which has ever since, and at this day does suspend a plummet of an ounce and half at the index of my three-feet quadrant.

The

The next morning, the 13th of November, having settled our account with our host, we set out from the hospitable house of Shalaka Welled Am-lac, after having engaged, by promises to the ladies, that we should pay them soon another visit. Our landlord accompanied us in person to the ford, and by this, and his readiness to shew us what he thought worthy of our curiosity, and by his care in ascertaining for us the distances and the situations of places, he gave us a certain proof he was well contented, and therefore that we had nothing to fear.

We had both nights heard the noise of cataracts, and we thought it might be of the Nile, as we were in fact but five miles from the second small cataract at Kerr, which lay W. S. W. of us. We were informed, however, in the morning, that it was the sound of falls in the river Jemma, near whose banks this house is situated. We set out at eight o'clock, the hills of Arooffi bearing north; and at half past eight we came to the ford of the Jemma, which is strong, rugged, and uneven.

The Jemma here comes from the east; its banks are most beautifully shaded with acacia and other trees, growing as on the west of the Nile, that is, the trunks or stems of the trees at a distance, but the tops touching each other, and spreading abroad. Though growing to no height, these woods are full of game of different kinds, mostly unknown in Europe. The bohur is here in great numbers; also the Buffalo, though not so frequent.

Whoever

Whoever sees Richmond hill has an idea of the banks of the Jemma, and the country east of it, with all that addition that an eastern and happier climate can give it; for the rains had now ceased, and every hill was in flower; the sun indeed was hot, but a constant and fresh breeze prevented its being felt near the river. The heat in this country ceases in the warmest day, the moment we pass from the sun to the shade: we have none of those hot winds or violent reflections which we had suffered in Egypt, Syria, and Arabia, and both the coasts of the Red Sea.

There are two cataracts lower than this ford of the Jemma, the first about 300 yards below the ford, and another larger, something about half a mile; it is not, however, more than seven or eight feet high, perhaps about ninety feet broad, and the sheet of water is not entire, but is interrupted in many places. It falls, however, into a magnificent basin above 400 yards square, and very deep, in which are large fish in great plenty, but no crocodiles; nor indeed are there any seen as I have heard above the third cataract, nor considerably below, when, after having made the tour of Gojam, it again turns northward towards its sources. The Gomari, however, often comes to the mouth of the Jemma, especially when the first rains fall; the crocodile seems to require a warmer climate.

After having satisfied our curiosity as to the Jemma, I began to reproach those that were with me

me about the panic which they felt the night before ; these were, a Greek of Gondar, Strates, and three others, my servants, whom I brought from Cairo. “ You see, said I, what danger there is ; Welled Amlac is with us upon a mule, without a lance or shield, and only two naked servants with him ; did not I tell you what was the meaning of the news ? ” Though this was spoken in a language of which it was impossible Amlac could know a syllable, yet he presently apprehended in part what I would say. “ I see, says he, you believe what I told you last night to be false, and invented only to get from you a present : but you shall see ; and if this day we do not meet Welled Aragawi and his soldiers, you are then in the right ; it is as you imagine. ” — “ You do me wrong, said I, and have not understood me, for how should you ? Those white people believe too well all you told them, and are only apprehensive of your not being able to defend us, being without arms and followers. All I said was, that where you were, armed or unarmed, there was no danger. ” — “ True, says he, you are now in Maitsha, and not in my country, which is Goutto ; you are now in the worst country in all Abyssinia, where the brother kills his brother for a loaf of bread, of which he has no need : you are in a country of Pagans, or dogs, Galla, and worse than Galla ; if ever you meet an *old man* here, he is a stranger ; all that are natives die by the lance young ; and yet, though

though these two chieftains I mentioned fight to-day, unarmed as I am, (as you well said) you are in no danger while I am with you. These people of Maitsha, shut up between the Jemma, the Nile, and the lake, have no where but from the Agows to get what they want; they come to the same market with us here in Goutto; the fords of the Jemma, they know, are in my hands; and did they offer an injury to a friend of mine, were it but to whistle as he passed them, they know I am not gentle; though not a Galla, they are sensible, one day or other, I should call them to account, though it were in the bed-chamber of their master Fafil."

"Your master, Welled Amlac, with your leave, said I." "Yes, mine too, said he, by force, but he never shall be my master by inclination, after murdering Kasmati Eshté. He calls me his brother, and believes me his friend. You saw one of his wives, whom he leaves at my house, last night, but I hope still to see him and his Galla slaughtered as the cow in my house was yesterday." "I am surprised, said I, your house was spared, and that Ras Michael did not burn it in either of his passages through Maitsha."—"In 1769, replied he, I was not with Fafil at Fagitta, and the Ras passed the Nile above this far beyond the Kelti; after which I returned with him to Gondar. In Ginbot*, Fafil informed us that

* The 1st of Ginbot is the 26th of our April.

Amhara and Begemder were come over to him. When then all Maitsha joined Fafil, I went with my people to meet Michael at Derdera, as I knew he must pass the Nile here opposite to Abbo, and Begemder and Amhara would then be behind him, or else try to cross at Delakus, which was then swollen with rain, and unfordable: but apprehensive lest, marching still higher up along the Nile to find a ford, he might burn my house in his way, I myself joined him the night before he knew of Powuffen's revolt, and he had it then in contemplation to burn Samseen. The next morning was that of his retreat, and he chose me to accompany him across the Nile, still considering me as his friend, and therefore, perhaps he would have done no harm to my house."—"So it was you, said I, that led us that day into that cursed clay-hole, which you call a ford, where so many people and beasts were maimed and lost?"—He replied, "It was Fafil's spies that first persuaded him to pass there, or at Kerr. I kept him to the place where you passed; you would have all perished at Kerr. This, to be sure, was not a good ford, nor passable at all except in summer, unless by swimming; but so many men crossing had made it still worse; besides, do you remember what a storm it was?—what a night of rain? O Lady Mariam, always a virgin, said I, while they struggled in the mud and clay. O holy Abba Guebra Menfus Kedus, who never ate or drank from his mother's womb till his death, will you not

not open the earth, that all this accursed multitude may descend alive into hell, like Dathan and Abiram?"—A kind and charitable prayer!—"I thank you for it, Welled Amlac, said I; first, for carrying us to that charitable ford, where, with one of the strongest and ablest horses in the world, I had nearly perished:—and, secondly for your pious wish, to dispose of us out of the regions of rain and cold into so warm quarters in company with Dathan and Abiram!"

"I did not know you was there, says he; I heard you had staid at Gondar in order to bring up the black horse. I saw a white person * with the Ras, indeed, who had a good hanjar and gun, but his mule was weak, and he himself seemed sick. As I returned I could have carried him off in the night, but I said, perhaps it is the brother of Yagoube, my friend and physician; he is white like him, and for your sake I left him. I was much with you white people in the time of Kasmati Eshté."—"And pray, said I, what did you after we passed the Abay?"—"After I saw that devil Ras Michael over, said Welled Amlac, I returned under pretence of assisting Kessa Yafous there, and, being joined by all my people, we fell upon the stragglers wherever we found them. You know what a day of rain it was; we took 17 guns 12 horses, and about 200 mules and asses laden, and so returned home, leaving the

* This was Francisco, who was sick.

rest to Fasil, who, if he had been a man, should have cut you all to pieces the day after."—"And what did you, said I, with those stragglers whom you met and robbed; did you kill them?"—"We always kill them, answered Amlac; we spare none; we never do a man an injury, and leave him alive to revenge it upon us after; but it was really the same; they were all sick and weak, and the hyæna would have finished them in the morning, so it was just saving them so much suffering to kill them outright the night before; and I assure you, Yagoube, whatever you may think, I did not do it out of malice."—From this conversation one may sufficiently guess what sort of a man Welled Amlac was, and what were his ideas of mercy.

We passed the church of Kedus Michael at half after nine, on the road to our right. At nine and three quarters our course was N. by W. and, at a quarter after ten we passed the Coga, a large river. At three quarters past ten our course was north. We passed the church of Abbo a quarter of a mile on our right. The country, after we had crossed the Jemma, was much less beautiful than before. At twelve our course was N. by W. and at half past twelve the church of Mariam Net, 200 yards to the left; and here we forded the small river Amlac-Ohha. Every step of this ground put us in mind of our disastrous campaign in May; and we were now passing directly in the tract of the ever-memorable retreat of Kefla Yafous and

and the rear of the army. At a quarter after one we halted at a small village of low houses, as it were in bent grass, where, for the first time, we saw flocks of goats lying on the tops of the houses for fear of wild beasts.

“ You shall see, says Welled Amlac, whether I am telling truth or not; this is the house of Welled Aragawi; if he is here at home, then I have deceived you.” We saw a number of women laden with jars of bouza and hydromel, and asked where they were going. They said to their master at Delakus, who waited there to prevent Wellela Michael of Degwassa from passing the river. Our Greeks on this began to relapse into their panic, and to wish we were again at Welled Abea Abbo. At three quarters past one we continued our journey to the north, and passed a river, called Amlac-Ohha, larger than the former: it comes from the east, and, half a mile further, receives the other stream already mentioned. The sun was now burning hot. At three o'clock we halted a quarter of an hour; and, beginning to descend gently, an hour after this we came to the banks of the Abay. Here we saw the two combatants, Wellela Michael and Welled Aragawi, exactly opposite to each other, the first on the west the other on the east side; they had settled all their differences, and each had killed several kine for themselves and friends, which was all the blood shed that day.

The Nile is here a considerable river ; its breadth at this time full three quarters of an English mile ; the current is very gentle ; where deep you can scarce perceive it flow ; it comes from W. by S. and W. S. W. and at the ford runs east and west. The banks on the east side were very high and steep ; and on the west, at the first entrance, the bottom is soft and bad, the water four feet and a half deep, but above another foot, which we sink in clay. I cried to Welled Amlac, while he was leading my mule across, that he should not pray to his saint that never eats, as at the passage of the Jemma in May. He only answered lowly to me, Do you think these thieves would have let you pass if I was not with you ? My answer was, Welleta Michael would not have seen me wronged ; I saved his life, he and every body knows it.

We gained with difficulty the middle of the river, where the bottom was firm, and there we rested a little. Whilst we were wading near the other side, we found foul ground, but the water was shallow, and the banks low and easy to ascend. The river side, as far as we could see, is bare and destitute of wood of any kind, only bordered with thistles and high grass, and the water tinged deep with red earth, of which its banks are composed. This passage is called Delakus, and is passable from the end of October to the middle of May. Immediately on the top of the hill ascending from the river is the small town of Delakus, which gives this ford its name ; it extends from N. E. to N. N. E.

N. N. E. and is more considerable in appearance than is the generality of these small towns or villages in Abyffinia, because inhabited by Mahometans only, a trading, frugal, intelligent, and industrious people.

Our conductor, Welled Amlac, again put us in mind of the service he had rendered us, and we were not unmindful of him. He had been received with great respect by the eastern body of combatants, and it is incredible with what expedition he swallowed near a pound of raw flesh cut from the buttocks of the animal yet alive. After some horns of hydromel, he had passed to the other side, where he was received with still more affection, if possible, by Welleta Michael, and there he began again to eat the raw meat with an appetite as keen as if he had fasted for whole days; he then consigned us to Ayto Welleta Michael, his friend and mine, who furnished us with a servant to conduct us on our way, while he himself remained that night at the ford among the combatants. He advised us to advance as far as possible, for all that country was destroyed by a malignant fever which laid all waste beyond Delakus.

We left the ford at a quarter past five in the evening, and, pursuing our journey north, we passed the small town of Delakus, continuing along the hill among little spots of brushwood and small fields of corn intermixed. At half past six passed the river Avola. At half past seven crossed ano-

ther swift-running stream, clear and shallow, but full of slippery stones. At three quarters after seven we alighted at Googue, a considerable village, and, as it was now night, we could go no farther; we had already several times mistaken our way, and lost each other in the dark, being often also mired in a small plain before we passed the last river; but our guide had heard the order of his master, and pushed on briskly.

We found the people of Googue the most savage and inhospitable we had yet met with. Upon no account would they suffer us to enter their houses, and we were obliged to remain without, the greatest part of the night. At last they carried us to a house of good appearance, but refused absolutely to give us meat for ourselves or horses; and, as we had not force, we were obliged to be content. It had rained violently in the evening, and we were all wet. We contented ourselves with lighting a large fire in the middle of the house, which we kept burning all night, as well for guard, as for drying ourselves, though we little knew at the time that it was probably the only means of saving our lives; for in the morning we found the whole village sick of the fever, and two families had died out of the house where these people had put us: for my own part, upon hearing this I was more affrighted than for Welled Aragawi and all his robbers. Though weary and wet, I had slept on the ground near the fire six whole hours; and, though really well, I could not during the

the day persuade myself there was not some symptom of fever upon me. My first precaution was to infuse a dose of bark into a glass of aquavitæ, a large horn of which we had with us ; we then burnt frankincense and myrrh in abundance, and fumigated ourselves, as practised at Masuah and in Arabia. Early in the morning we repeated our dose of bark and fumigation. Whether the bark prevented the disease or not, the aquavitæ certainly strengthened the spirits, and was a medicine to the imagination.

The people, who saw the eagerness and confidence with which we swallowed this medicine, flocked about us demanding assistance. I confess I was so exasperated with their treatment of us, and especially that of lodging us in the infected house, that I constantly refused them their request, leaving them a prey to their distemper, to teach them another time more hospitality to strangers.

This fever prevailed in Abyssinia in all low grounds and plains, in the neighbourhood of all rivers which run in valleys, it is really a malignant tertian, which, however, has so many forms and modes of intermission that it is impossible for one not of the Faculty to describe it. It is not in all places equally dangerous, but on the banks and neighbourhood of the Tacazzé it is particularly fatal. The valley where that river runs is very low and sultry, being full of large trees. In Kuara, too, it is very mortal ; in Belessen and Dembea less so ; in Walkayt it is dangerous ; but

not so much in Tzegadè, Kolla', Woggora, and Waldubba. It does not then prevail in high grounds or mountains, or in places much exposed to the air. This fever is called Nedad, or burning; it begins always with a shivering and head-ach, a heavy eye, and inclination to vomit; a violent heat follows, which leaves little intermission, and ends generally in death the third or fifth day. In the last stage of the distemper the belly swells to an enormous size, or sometimes immediately after death, and the body within an instant smells insupportably; to prevent which they bury the corpse immediately after the breath is out, and often within the hour. The face has a remarkable yellow appearance, with a blackish cast, as in the last stage of a dropy or the atrophy. This fever begins immediately with the sun-shine, after the first rains, that is, while there are intervals of rain and sun-shine: it ceases upon the earth being thoroughly soaked in July and August, and begins again in September; but now, at the beginning of November, it finally ceases everywhere.

The country about Googue is both fertile and pleasant, all laid out in wheat, and the grain good. They were now in the midst of their harvest, but there were some places, to which the water could be conducted, where the corn was just appearing out of the ground. From Googue we have an extensive view of the lake Tzana, whilst the mountains of Begemder and Karoota, that is, all the ridge along Foggora, appear distinctly

tinctly enough, but they are sunk low, and near the horizon.

On the 14th, at three quarters past seven in the morning, we left the inhospitable village Googue ; our road lay N. by W. up a hill. At half past eight we crossed the village of Azzadari, in which runs a small river, then almost stagnant, of the same name. At three quarters after eight, the church of Turcon Abbo, being a quarter of a mile to our right. At three quarters after nine we passed the river Avolai, coming from N. W. and which with all the other streams above mentioned, fall into the lake : and from this begins Degwassä. At half past ten we rested half an hour. At eleven continued our journey N. by W. and at half after eleven, entered again into the great road of Buré, by Kelti. All the country from Googue is bare, unpleasant, unwholesome, and ill-watered. Those few streams it has are now standing in pools, and are probably stagnant in January and February. The people, too, are more miserable than in any other part of Maitsha and Goutto,

As we are now leaving Maitsha, it will be the place to say something concerning it in particular. Maitsha is either proper, or what is called so by extension. Maitsha Proper is bounded on the west by the Nile, on the south by the river Jemma, dividing it from Goutto ; and, on the other side of Amid Amid, by the province of Damot ; on the south by Gojam ; on the east and north by the

the Abay or Nile, and the lake: this is Maitsha Proper; but by extension it comprehends a large tract on the west side of the Nile, which begins by Sankrabier on the north, and is bounded by the Agows on the west, comprehending Atcheffer and Arooffi to the banks of the Nile. This is the Maitsha of the books, but is not properly so.

Maitsha is governed by ninety-nine Shums, and is an appendage of the office of Betwudet, to whom it pays two thousand ounces of gold. The people are originally of those Galla west of the Abay. Yafous the Great, when at war with that people, who, in many preceding reigns, had laid waste the provinces of Gojam and Damot, and especially Agow, when he passed the Abay found these people at variance among themselves; and the king, who was everywhere victorious, being joined by the weakest, advanced to Narea, and, on his return, transplanted these Galla into Maitsha, placing part of them along the Nile to guard the passes. His successors at different times followed his example; part they settled in Maitsha, and part along the banks of the Nile in Damot and Gojam, where being converted to Christianity, at least to such Christianity as is professed in Abyssinia, they have increased exceedingly, and amounted, at least before the war in 1768, to 15,000 men, of whom about 4000 are horsemen.

The capital of Maitsha is Ibaba. There is here a house or small castle belonging to the king. The town is one of the largest in Abyssinia, little inferior

ferior to Gondar in size or riches, and has a market every day; this is governed by an officer called Ibaba Azage, whose employment is worth 600 ounces of gold, and is generally conferred upon the principal person of Maitsh, to keep him firm in his allegiance, as there is a very considerable territory depends upon this office. The country round Ibaba is the most pleasant and fertile, not of Maitsha only, but of all Abyssinia, especially that part called Kollala, between Ibaba and Gojam, where the principal Ovoros have all houses and possessions, called Goult or Fiefs, which they have received from their respective ancestors when kings.

Though Maitsha be peculiarly the appendage of Betwudet, and governed by him, yet it has a particular political government of its own. The ninety-nine Shums, who are each a distinct family of Galla, chuse a king, like the Pagan Galla, every seventh year, with all the ceremonies anciently observed when they were Pagans; and these governors have much more influence over them than the King of Betwudet; so have they (in my time at least) been in a constant rebellion, and that has much lessened their numbers, which will not now amount to above 10,000 men, Ras Michael having every where destroyed their houses, and carried into slavery their wives and children, who have been sold to the Mahometan merchants, and transported to Mafuah, and from thence to Arabia.

At

At twelve o'clock, Guesgùé was to the right three or four, perhaps more miles; and the very rugged mountain Caserela, broken and full of precipices, on our right, at about 12 miles distance; they rise from Kolla. Guesgùé, which, though the language and race may be Agow, is not comprehended in the government of that country, but generally goes with Kuara. At a quarter past one we arrived at the house of Ayto Welleta Michael, at Degwassa, after entering into a country something more pleasant and cultivated than the former. The village of Degwassa is but small; it had also been burnt in the late war; it is pleasantly situated on a hill south of the lake, about 3 miles distance, and is surrounded with large wanzey-trees; we were but ill-received at this village, notwithstanding the promises of the master of it at the passage of the Abay, and we found these people scarcely more hospitable than those at Googue. This village is a little out of the road, to the right. We had travelled this day five hours and a half, or little more than ten miles.

On the 15th of November, from Degwassa we entered Gonzala, immediately bordering upon it: heavy rain prevented our setting out till noon. Gonzala is full of villages, and belongs to the queen-mother. At a quarter after one we passed a large marsh, in the midst of which runs a small river which here falls into the lake. We rested here half an hour; and at three quarters past one, we entered the great road which we passed to the left

left in going to Degwassa. At two o'clock we came still to a distinct view of the lake, as also where the river enters and goes out; it appears here to enter at S. W. and go out at N. E. and is distant about eight or nine miles. At three quarters past two, we arrived at Dingleber, having this day travelled only two hours and a half, or five miles.

On the 16th we left Dingleber at seven o'clock in the morning: it was very hot; and, a little before we came to Mescaloxos, in a stripe of land, or peninsula, which runs out into the lake, we halted a short time under the shade of some acacia-trees. Here we saw plenty of water-fowl, and several gomaris. A small river crosses the road here, and falls into the lake: and, at one o'clock in the afternoon, we continued our journey, and overtook a troop of Agows, who were going to Gondar, laden with honey, butter, and untanned hides. They had with them also about 800 head of cattle. These people accustomed to the road (though heavily laden) go long journies: they had at this time 50 miles to make by nine o'clock in the morning of the 18th, and it was now the 16th past one o'clock.

A shower overtook us soon after passing Mescaloxos, and forced us to take refuge in some small huts near the lake, called Goja, where we remained. The inhabitants of this and the neighbouring villages speak Falasha, the language anciently of all Dembea, which, as has been already observed,

observed, in most of the plain country, has now given place to Amharic. Here we saw two gomari come out of the lake and enter the corn, but speedily upon the dogs of the villages attacking them, they ran and plunged into the water; we could not have a distinct view of them, nor time enough to design them, but they were very different from any draught we had ever seen of them. The head seemed to me to resemble that of a hog more than a horse. We had this day travelled six hours and a half, or about thirteen miles.

On the 17th, at a quarter past seven, we left Goja. At one o'clock we halted at Sar Ohha, after a journey of five hours and a half, or about eleven miles; and on the 18th, at half past six, left Sar Ohha. At three quarters past seven we passed the river Talti, and at half past eleven halted at Abba Abram, near the church, under a large fassa-tree. At one continued our journey, and at a quarter past two arrived at Kemona.

On the 19th of November, at seven in the morning, we left Kemona, and going constantly without stopping by Chergué and Azazo, I sent my servants and baggage on to Abba Samuel at Gondar, where they arrived at one o'clock afternoon, and finished our long-projected expedition, or journey to the fountains of the Nile, having, in our return home, made as it were the chord of the arch of our former journey, or about ninety-three miles, with which we found our points, as settled by observation, did very nearly agree.

Two

Two things chiefly occupied my mind, and prevented me from accompanying my servants and baggage into Gondar. The first was my desire of instantly knowing the state of Ozoro Esther's health: the second was, to avoid Fasil, till I knew little more about Ras Michael and the king. Taking one servant along with me, I left my people at Azazo, and turning to the left, up a very craggy, steep mountain, I made the utmost diligence I could till I arrived at the gate of Koscam, near two o'clock, without having met any one from Fasil, who was encamped opposite to Gondar, on the Kabba, on the side of the hill, so that I had passed obliquely behind him. He had, however, seen or heard of the arrival of my servants at Gondar, and had sent for me to wait upon him in his camp; and, when he was informed I had gone forward to Koscam, it was said he had uttered some words of discontent.

I went straight to the Iteghè's apartment, but was not admitted, as she was at her devotions. In crossing one of the courts, however, I met a slave of Ozoro Esther, who, instead of answering the question I put to her, gave a loud shriek, and went to inform her mistress. I found that princess greatly recovered, as her anxiety about Fasil had ceased. She admitted him to an audience, and he had communicated to her the engagement he was under to her husband, as also the conduct he intended to pursue in order to keep

Gasho

Gusho and Powuffen from taking any effectual measures which might frustrate, or at least delay, the restoration of the king and arrival of Ras Michael.

C H A P. XXL

*Fasil's insidious Behaviour—Arrival at Gondar—
King passes the Taccazzé—Iteghé and Socinios fly
from Gondar.*

I SHALL now resume the history of Abyssinia itself, so far as I was concerned in it, or had an opportunity of knowing, and this I shall follow as closely as possible, till I begin my return home through those dreary and hitherto-unknown deserts of Sennaar, though not the most entertaining, yet by far the most dangerous and most difficult part of the voyage.

It was about the 20th of October that Woodage Asahel came with a strong body of horse into the neighbourhood of Gondar, and cut off all communication between the capital and those provinces to the southward of it. This occasioned a temporary famine, as his troops plundered all those they met on the road carrying provisions to the market. At first he refused to tell what his real errand was; but, a few days after,
having

having passed the low country of Dembea, he took post at Dingleber, on the road to Maitsha and the country of the Agows, and then he declared his only intention in coming was to join Fasil, then marching to Gondar at the head of a large army; nor was the cause of that great army, nor the reason of Fasil's coming, so sufficiently known as to free any party entirely from their apprehensions.

Sanuda, who filled the office of Ras, and the rest of that party, endeavoured to determine Asahel to enter Gondar, and pay his homage to Socinios, now king; not doubting but his example would have the effect of making others do the like, and that so by degrees they might collect troops enough to make Michael respect them, so far at least as to defer for a season his march from Tigré. They prevailed, indeed, so far as to engage Asahel to enter Gondar on the 28th of October, the day that we left it; so, by a few hours, and his taking a low road that he might plunder the villages in Dembea, we missed a meeting of the most dangerous and most disagreeable kind. After having made his usual parade, and passed his cavalry in review before Socinios, he had his public audience, where he said he came charged by Fasil to declare that he was ready to set out for Gondar, and bring with him that part of the revenue due to the king from the provinces he commanded, provided he had a man of sufficient trust to leave in his stead at home; and therefore he prayed the king to
appoint

appoint him Woodage Afahel to command in the provinces of Damot, Maitsha, and Agow, in his absence.

After the many promises and engagements Fafil had made and broken, without ever assigning the smallest reason, it may be doubted whether Socinios believed this fair tale implicitly; but his present intention being to gain Woodage, it little signified whether it was strictly true or not; he therefore received it as true. Fafil's request was granted to the full; and this robber, twenty times a rebel, bred up in woods and deserts, in exercise of every crime, was appointed to a command the third in the kingdom for rank, power, and riches; and, what was never before seen, the king went out of his palace to Deppabye, the public market-place, to see the circle of gold, called the Ras Werk, put upon his head; this, with the white and blue mantle, invests him with the white and blue mantle, invests him with the dignity of Kalmati, or lieutenant-general of the king, in the province given him.

A low man, such as Afahel was, could not resist the caresses of his sovereign; he was entirely gained; and, in return, made privately to Socinios, and a few confidants, a communication of all he knew, which their natural imprudence, and private previous engagements, afterwards made public. The substance of this confidence was, that peace had been made and sworn to, in the most solemn manner, both by Michael and

Fasil; that they were to restore the king, Tecla Haimanout; that they were, by their joint means, to effect, if possible, the ruin of Gusho and Powussen, governors of Begemder and Amhara; Fasil was to enjoy the post of Ras and Betwudet, and to dispose of the government of Begemder and Amharra to his friends; Ras Michael was to content himself with the province of Tigré, as he then enjoyed it, and advance no further than the river Tacazzé, where he was to deliver the king to Fasil, and return to his province. Sanuda was, in the mean time, to appear as Ras by the connivance of Fasil and Michael; and, if he saw the people of the Iteghé's party resolved upon electing a king, he was to take care to choose such a one as would soon prove himself incapable of reigning, but fill the vacancy in the mean time, and prevent the election from falling upon a worthier candidate from the mountain of Wechné. Fasil, on his part, undertook by promises and proposals, and occasionally by the approach of his army, to frighten and confuse the Iteghé, and prevent a good understanding taking place between her, Gusho, and Powussen. The last article of this treaty was, that no more should be said of Joas the late king's murder, but all that transaction was to be buried in eternal oblivion. This peace, Afahel had said, was made by the mediation of Welleta Selaissé, nephew of Ras Michael, whom we have often mentioned as having been taken prisoner by Fasil at the battle of Limjour.

This

This discovery, dangerous as it might have been in other times and circumstances, from the weakness of the present government, had no consequences hurtful to any concerned in it. Sanuda, who was not present when Afahel revealed the secret, affected to laugh at it as an improbable fiction; and though this whole scene of treachery was confirmed part by part, yet it was so deeply laid, and so well supported, that, even when discovered, it could not be prevented, till, step by step, it was carried into execution.

Fasil was encamped at Bamba, as we have already mentioned; he had discharged all those savage Galla that he had brought from the other side of the Nile. As soon as he had heard in how favourable a manner Woodage Afahel had been received, he decamped, taking with him 400 horse and 600 foot, all chosen men, from Maitsha and Damot, and with these he advanced, by forced marches, to Gondar, where he arrived the 2d of November, to the surprise of the whole town and court, for he had already so often promised, and so often broken his word, that nobody pretended to guess more about him till they actually saw him arrived. That same evening he waited on the queen, where he made a short visit; he paid a still shorter to the king, and no business passed at either of these meetings.

The king, Socinios, was now more than ever confirmed in the belief of Afahel's information, because, notwithstanding that Fasil knew perfectly

his necessities, and that for seven years he had not paid a farthing to the revenue, he still had not brought either payment, or present of any sort; and, instead of coming with a large army to give battle to Ras Michael, he arrived as in peace with scarce a body guard; and, what seemed to put the matter beyond all doubt, the very night of his arrival, upon coming from his audience, he set Welleta Selaffé at liberty, and sent him to Tigré to his uncle Ras Michael, loaded with many presents, and with every mark of respect. There were, however, about Socinios some people of wisdom enough to counsel him to take no notice of this behaviour of Fasil, which seemed to favour strongly of defiance; and he was wise enough for a short time to follow their advice. As he had, by fair means, gained Woodage Afahel, he thought he might, by pursuing the same conduct, succeed with Fasil also.

In the morning, therefore, of the 3d of November, without attempting further discussion, proclamation was made that Fasil was Ras and Betwudet, governor of Damot, Maitsha, and Agow, and had the disposal of all places under the king throughout the empire; declaring also, that all appointments that had been made by the Iteghé or himself, in Fasil's absence, were null and void, to be again filled up by Fasil only. Socinios, however, soon found that he had a different spirit to manage than that of Woodage Afahel. Fasil took him at his word, accepted of the appointment,

ment, began immediately to exercise his power, and the very first day he gave the post of Cantiba, that is, governor of Dembea, to Ayto Engedan, nephew to the queen-mother, and son to Kasmati Eshté, whom he himself had deposed, murdered, and succeeded in the government of Damot and Maitsha; and Selassé Barea, brother to Ayto Aylo, he made Palambaras. These appointments just planted the king in the difficulty that was intended; for the places had been given to Kasmati Sanuda, as a recompence for resigning the posts of Ras and Betwudet, which were now conferred upon Fasil; and Sanuda, whom Socinios believed his only friend, and the person that raised him to the throne, was now left destitute of all employment whatever, by an act of seeming ingratitude flowing from the king alone.

The next day Fasil, pursuing the same line of conduct, appointed Adera Tacca Georgis, a creature of his own, Fit-Auraris to the king. None of these preferments Socinios could be brought to comply with; so that when these noblemen came to do homage for their respective places, Socinios absolutely refused to receive them, or displace Kasmati Sanuda. This involved the king in still greater difficulties, for he thereby broke his word with Fasil, who had done nothing more than Socinios gave him authority to do. On the other hand, Selassé Barea was brother to Ayto Aylo, the queen's greatest counsellor and confident; equal to his brother both in wisdom, integrity,
and

and riches, and in the favour of the people, but much more ambitious and desirous of governing, consequently more dangerous when disobliged.

Socinius, who did not believe that Sanuda was treacherously urging him to his ruin, continued obstinate in rejecting Fasil's appointment, and all fell immediately into confusion. Troops flocked in from every quarter, as upon a signal given. Ayto Engedan, in discontent with a thousand men sat down near Gondar on the river Mogetch; his brother Aylo, at Emfras, about 15 miles further, with double that number; Ayto Confu, his cousin-german, with about 600 horse, lay above Koscam for the protection of Ozoro Esther, his mother, and the Iteghé his grandmother—all were in arms, though upon the defensive.

In this situation of things I arrived at Gondar on the 19th of November, but could not see the queen, who had retired into her apartment under pretence of devotion, but rather from disgust and melancholy, at seeing that every thing, however the contrary might be intended, seemed to conspire to bring about the return of Ras Michael, the event in the world she dreaded most. I found with Ozoro Esther the Acab Saat, Abba Salama, who, as we have already observed, had excommunicated her uncle Kasmati Eshté, and afterwards contrived his murder, and had also a very principal share in that of Joas himself. It was he that Fasil said had sent to him to desire that I might not be allowed to proceed to the head of the
the

the Nile, and that from no other reason but a hatred to me as a Frank. We bowed to each other as two not very great friends, and he immediately began a very dry, ill-natured, admonitory discourse, addressed, for the greatest part, to Ozoro Esther, explaining to her the mischief of suffering Franks to remain at liberty in the country and meddle in affairs. I interrupted him by a laugh, and by saying, If it is me, father, you mean by the word Frank, I have, without your advice, gone where I intended, and returned in safety; and as for your country, I will give you a very handsome present to put me safely out of it, in any direction you please, to-morrow—the sooner the better.

At this instant Ayto Confu came into his mother's apartment, caught the last words which I had said, and asked of me in a very angry tone of voice, Who is he that wishes you out of the country?—"I do, sincerely and heartily, said I, for one; but what you last heard was in consequence of a friendly piece of advice that Abba Salama here has been giving me."—"Father, father, says Confu, turning to him very sternly, do you not think the measure of your good deeds is yet near full? Do you not see this place, Kafmati Eshté's house, surrounded by the troops of my father Michael, and do you think yourself in safety, when you have so lately excommunicated both the King and Ras? Look you, says he, turning to his mother, what does the people of this country

try are; that Pagan there, who calls himself a Christian, did charitably recommend it to Fasil to rob or murder Yagoube, a stranger offending nobody, when he got him among his Galla in Dامت: this did not succeed. He then persuaded Woodage Afahel to send a party of robbers from Samseen to intercept him in Maitsha. Coque Abou Barea himself told me it was at that infidel's desire that he sent Wellela Selaffé of Guesgué with a party to cut him off, who missed him narrowly at Degwassa; and all this for what? I shall swear they should not have found ten ounces of gold upon him, except Fasil's present, and that they dared not touch."—"But God, said Ozoro Esther, saw the integrity of his heart, and that his hands were clean; and that is not the case with the men in this country."—"And therefore, said Confu, he made Fasil his friend and protector. Woodage Afahel's party fell in with an officer of Wellela Yafous, who cut them all to pieces while robbing some Agows." Then rising up from the place where he was sitting at his mother's feet, with a raised voice and countenance full of fury, turning to Abba Salama, he said, "And I, too, am now nobody; a boy! a child! a mockery to three such Pagan infidels as you, Fasil, and Abou Barea, because Ras Michael is away!"—Says the Acab Saat, with great composure, or without any seeming anger, "You are excommunicated, Confu; you are excommunicated if you say I am Infidel or Pagan: I am a Christian priest."—"A priest of the devil, says Confu, in a great passion

passion—wine and women, gluttony, lying, and drunkenness—these are your gods! Away! says he, putting his hand to his knife: by Saint Michael I swear, ten days shall not pass before I teach both Coque Abou Barea and you your duty. Come, Yagoube, come and see my horses; when I have put a good man upon each of them we shall together hunt your enemies to Sennaar.” He swung hastily out of the door, and I after him, and left Abba Salama dying with fear, as Osoro Esther told me afterwards, saying only to her, as he went out, Remember I did not excommunicate him.

I left Confu with his horses and men; and, though it was now late, I went to the camp to pay my compliments to Fafil. Having no arms, I was very much molested both in going and coming, under various pretences; I was afterwards kept waiting about half an hour in the camp without seeing him; he only sent me a message that he would see me on the morrow. However, we met several friends we had seen at Bamba, and from them we learned at length what we shortly had heard from Ayto Confu, that Woodage Afahel had sent a party to intercept and rob us; and it was that party which was called the five Agows, who had passed Fafil’s army the night after we left Kelti *. They told us that the Lamb said they were Agows, not to alarm us, but that he

* See my last journey to the fountains of the Nile.

knew

knew very well who they were, and what was their errand ; and that, the night after he left us, he got upon their track by information from three countrymen whom they had robbed of some honey, surrounded them, and, in the morning, had attacked them west of Geesh, and, though inferior in number, had slain and wounded the whole party as dexterously as he had promised to us at our last interview.

I sent a small present to our friend the Lamb, in token of gratitude to him, and delivered it to the people, that I might be sure one of them would not steal it, and took Fasil's guarantee to see it delivered ; but this was upon a following day. I resolved to remain at Koscam in the house the Iteghé had given me, as it was easy to see things were drawing to a crisis, which would inevitably end in blood.

It was not till the 23d of November I first saw the Iteghé. She sent for me early in the morning, and had a large breakfast prepared : Ayto Confu and Ayto Engedan were there ; she looked very much worn out and indisposed. When I came first into her presence, I kneeled, with my forehead to the ground. She put on a very serious countenance, and, without desiring me to rise, said gravely to her people about her, " There, says she, see that madman, who in times like these, when we the natives of the country are not safe in our own houses, rashly, against all advice, runs out into the fields to be hunted like a wild beast
by

by every robber, of which this country is full." She then made me a sign to rise, which I did, and kissed her hand. "Madam, said I, if I did this, it was in consequence of the good lessons your majesty deigned to give me."—"Me! says she, with surprise, was it I that advised you, at such a time as this, to put yourself in the way of men like Coque Abou Barea, and Woodage Asahel, to be ill-used, robbed, and probably murdered?"—"No, said I, Madam, you certainly never did give me such advice; but you must own that every day I have heard you say, when you was threatened by a multitude of powerful enemies, that you was not afraid, you was in God's hands, and not in theirs. Now, Madam, Providence has hitherto protected you: I have, in humble imitation of you, had the same Christian confidence, and I have succeeded. I knew I was in God's hands, and therefore valued not the bad intentions of all the robbers in Abyssinia."—"Madam, says Ayto to Confu, is not Guesgué yours? does it pay you any thing?"

"It was mine, says the queen, while any thing was mine; but Michael took it and gave it to Coque Abou Barea, and since, it has paid me nothing. Fasil has sent for him about the affair of Yagoube, as he says, and has ordered him to come in the same manner that he himself is come in private; but forbid him to bring his army with him, in order that no means of relief may be possible to this devoted country." Large tears flowed

flowed down her venerable face at saying these words, and shewed the deep-rooted fear in her heart, that Michael's coming was decreed without possibility of prevention. "I wonder, says Ayto Engedan, laughing, to divert her, if Coque Abou Barea is the same good Christian that you Yagoubé are; if he is not, nothing else will save him from the hands of Confu and me; for we both want horses and mules for our men, and he has good ones, and arms too, that belonged to my father."—"And both of you says the queen are as bad men as either Woodage Afahel or Coque Abou Barea." At this moment the arrival of Fafil was announced, and we were all turned out, and went to breakfast. I saw him afterwards going out of the palace. He saluted me slightly, and seemed much pre-occupied in mind. He only desired me to come to Gondar next morning, and he would speak to me about Coque Abou Barea; but this the Iteghé refused to permit me to do, so I remained at Kofcam.

Fafil, although he did not deny that he had made peace with Ras Michael, yet, to quiet the minds of the people, always solemnly protested, that, so far from coming to Gondar, he never would consent to his crossing the Tacazzé; and this had, with most people, the desired-effect; for all Gondar loved Tecla Haimanout as much as they detested Socinios; but the bloodshed, and cruelty that would certainly attend Michael's coming, made them wish for any government that would

would free them from the terror of that event. On the other hand, Socinios, though now perfectly persuaded of Fasil's motives, had not deserted his own cause; he had sent Woodage Afahel, fortified with all his authority, into Maitsha, in order to raise a commotion there; ordered it to be proclaimed to the whole body of Galla in that province, that if they would come to Gondar, and prevent the arrival of Ras Michael, and bring their Bouco (or sceptre) along with them, they should have the election of their own governor, and not pay any thing to the king for seven years to come; and, besides, he had ordered Powussen of Begemder to endeavour, by a forced march, to surprise Fasil, then at Gondar, attended by a few troops. Mean time, he dissembled the best he could; but, as he had very shrewd people to deal with, it was more than probable his secret was early discovered.

Every hand being now armed, and all measures taken, as far as human foresight could reach, it was impossible to defer any longer the coming to blows in some part or other. On the 23d, at night, advice was received from Adera Tacca Georgis, an officer of Fasil in Maitsha, that he had attacked Woodage Afahel, who had collected a number of troops, and was endeavouring to raise commotions; and, after an obstinate combat, he had defeated him, and slain or wounded most of his followers: that Afahel himself, wounded twice
with

with a lance, had, by the goodness of his horse, escaped, and joined Powuffen in Begemder.

These news occasioned Fafil to throw off the mask : he now publicly avowed it was his intention to restore Tecla Haimanout to the throne, and that, rather than fail in it, he would replace Ras Michael in all his posts and dignities. He said that Socinios was created for mockery only ; and publicly asserted, that he was not son of Yafous, but one Mercurius, a private man at Deg-waffa ; and indeed he bore not, in his features or carriage, any resemblance to the royal family from which he pretended to be descended.

Socinios now saw that he was from henceforward to look upon Fafil as an enemy. Orders were accordingly given to shut the gates of the palace, and to station a number of troops in the different courts and avenues leading to the king's apartment. No person was to be admitted to the king without examination. The drums were beat, and constant guard kept ; and three hundred Mahometans taken into his service as musketeers ; a measure that gave great offence.

Fafil had taken up his residence in the house which belonged to the office of Ras, at the end of the town ; and to shew his contempt for the king, was very slightly guarded, his army remaining encamped under the palace. One thing at this time seemed particularly remarkable ; a drum was heard to beat in the house where Fafil was ; whereas it is an invariable rule, that no drum
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is suffered to beat in the capital any where but in the house where the king resides. It was said that king Yafous, second son to the Iteghé, or queen-mother, and father to Joas, had left two sons by a slave of the queen; indeed he had so many by low people, that very little care was taken of them, not even that of sending them to the mountain Wechné. One of these, after the murder of Joas, had appeared in Gojam, resolved to try his fortune; but he was apprehended by the governor of that province, sent to Gondar, and then to Wechné. It was said the other was with Fasil, in Gondar; that the drum that then beat in Fasil's house announced his speedy intention of making him king: all was confusion within the palace, but the Ras kept up a strict police in the town.

It was then towards the end of November, when, by mediation of the Abuna, the Queen, and the Itcheguè, peace was unexpectedly made between Socinios and Fasil; the latter swearing allegiance to Socinios as to his only sovereign, and the Abuna pronouncing excommunication upon either of them which should become the enemy of the other. What was the intention of this farce I never yet could learn; for the very next day Fasil deprived Gusho and Powussen of their governments of Amhara and Begemder, which was an express proof that his intention still was to restore Tecla Haimanout. The doors of the king's palace were again immediately shut, and signs of hostilities commenced as before.

I was

I was dining with Ozoro Esther, when a messenger arrived from Coque Abou Barca, with a complaint to the queen that he was on his march to Gondar, to pay his allegiance to Socinios, and bring him the tribute of his province, when he received a message from Fasil to return the greatest part of his troops; but that, desiring to be as useful as possible in preventing the coming of Michael, he so far disobeyed that order as to bring with him a considerable body of the best of his soldiers, sending the rest home under the conduct of Wellela Selassé; but that on the 26th, early in the morning, he had been surprised by Confu and Engedan, who, without any cause alledged, had killed and dispersed all his troops, and taken from them all the horses and mules, they could lay their hands on: that they after followed Wellela Selassé, and had come up with him unawares, just as he entered Guesgué, had defeated him, and that Ayto Engedan, in the beginning of the fight, had slain him with his own hand, by wounding him in the throat with a lance when stretching out his hand to parley; after which, they had set fire to nine villages in Guesgué, and given the plunder to their soldiers.

In the mean time Powussen had not disregarded the request of Socinios. He had attempted to surprise Fasil, but could not pass Aylo, who was at Emfras, without falling upon him first, which he did, dispersing his troops with little resistance.

Upon

Upon the first intelligence of this, Fasil proclaimed Tecla Haimanout king; and, striking his tents, sat down at Abba Samuel, a collection of villages about two miles from Gondar, inviting all people, that would escape the vengeance of Ras Michael, to come and join him, and leave Gondar. From this he retreated near to Dingleber, on the side of the lake, and intercepted all provisions coming to Gondar, which occasioned a very great famine, and many poor people died.

Hitherto I had no intercourse with Socinios, never having been in his presence, but when the Galla, the murderer of Joas, was tried; nor had I any reason to think he knew me, or cared for me more than any Greek that was in Gondar; but I had a good friend at court, who waked when I slept, and did not suffer me to pass unknown; this was the Acab Saat, Salama, who had instigated the king, on the 5th of December, in one of his drunken fits, to set out from the palace in the night, attended by a number of banditti, mostly Mahometans, to plunder several houses; he slew one man, as it was said, with his own hand: among these devoted houses mine happened to be one, but I was then happily at Kofcam. The next was Metical Aga's, one of whose servants escaped into a church-yard, the other being slain. The leader of this unworthy mob was Confu, brother to Guebra Mehedin. Every thing that could be carried away was stolen or
 Vol. IV. K k broken;

broken; among which was a reflecting telescope, a barometer, and thermometer, a great many papers and sketches of drawings, first torn, then burnt by Confu's own hand, with many curses and threats against me.

The next day, about nine o'clock, I had a message to come to the palace, where I went, and was immediately admitted. Socinios was sitting, his eyes half closed, red as scarlet with last night's debauch; he was apparently at that moment much in liquor; his mouth full of tobacco, squirting his spittle out of his mouth to a very great distance; with this he had so covered the floor, that it was with very great difficulty I could chuse a clean place to kneel and make my obeisance. He was dressed like the late king, but, in every thing else, how unlike! my mind was filled with horror and detestation, to see the throne on which he sat so unworthily occupied. I regarded him as I advanced with the most perfect contempt: Hamlet's lines describe him exactly:—

A murtherer and a villain :
 A slave, that is not twentieth part the tithe
 Of your preceding lord; a vice of kings;
 A cutpurse of the empire, and the rule,
 That from a shelf the precious diadem stole
 And put it in his pocket;
 A king of fureds and patches.

SHAKESPEARE.

It

It requires something of innate royalty to personate a king.

When I got up and stood before him, he seemed to be rather disconcerted, and not prepared to say any thing to me. There were few people there besides servants, most men of consideration having left Gondar, and gone with Fasil. After two or three squirts through his teeth, and a whisper from his brother Chremation, whom I had never before seen—"Wherefore is it, says he, that you who are a *great man*, do not attend the palace? you were constantly with Tecla Haimanout, the exile, or usurper, in peace and war: you used to ride with him, and divert him with your tricks on horseback, and, I believe, ate and drank with him. Where is all that money you got from Ras el Feel, of which province, I am told, you are still governor, though you conceal it? How dare you keep Yafine in that government, and not allow Abd el Jelleel, who is my slave, appointed to enter and govern that province?" I waited patiently till he had said all he had to say, and made a slight inclination of the head. I answered, "I am no great man, even in my own country; one proof of this is my being here in yours. I arrived in the time of the late king, and I was recommended to him by his friends in Arabia. You are perfectly well-informed as to the great kindness he did all along shew me, but this was entirely from his goodness, and no merit of mine. I never did eat or drink with him; it was an honour I could not have

been capable of aspiring to. Custom has established the contrary; and for me, I saw no pleasure or temptation to transgress this custom, though it had been in my option, as it was not. I have, for the most part, seen him eat and drink; an honour I enjoyed in common with his confidential servants, as being an officer of his household. The gold you mention, which I have several times got from the late King and Ras el Feel, I constantly spent for his service, and for my own honour. But at present I am neither governor of Ras el Feel, nor have I any post under heaven, nor do I desire it. Yafine, I suppose, holds his from Ayto Confu his superior, who holds it from the king by order of Ras Michael, but of this I know nothing. As for tricks on horseback, I know not what you mean. I have for many years been in constant practice of horsemanship among the Arabs. Mine, too, is a country of horsemen; and I profess to have attained to a degree not common, the management both of the lance and of fire-arms; but I am no buffoon, to shew tricks. The profession of arms is my birth-right derived from my ancestors, and with these, at his desire, I have often diverted the king, as an amusement worthy of him, and by no means below me.”—“The king! says he in a violent passion, and who then am I? a slave! Do you know, with a stamp of my foot I can order you to be hewn to pieces in an instant. You are a Frank, a dog, a liar, and a slave! Why did you tell the Iteghé that your house
was

was robbed of 50 ounces of gold? Any other king but myself would order your eyes to be pulled out in a moment, and your carcase to be thrown to the dogs."

What he said was true; bad kings have most executioners. I was not, however, dismayed: I was in my own mind, stranger and alone, superior to such a beast upon a throne. "The Iteghé, said I, is at present at Koscam, and will inform you if I told her of any gold that was stolen from me, except a gold-mounted knife which the late king gave me at Dingleber the day after the battle of Limjour, and which was accidentally left in my house, as I had not worn it since he went to Tigré." He squirted at this moment an arch of tobacco-spittle towards me, whether on purpose or not I do not know. I felt myself very much moved; it narrowly missed me. At this instant an old man, of a noble appearance, who sat in a corner of the room next him, got up, and, in a firm tone of voice, said, "I can bear this no longer; we shall become a proverb, and the hatred of all mankind. What have you to do with Yagoube, or why did you send for him? he was favoured by the late king, but not more than I have seen Greeks or Armenians in all the late reigns; and yet these very people confess, in their own country, they are not worthy of being his servants. He is a friend, not only to the king, but to us all: the whole people love him. As for myself, I never spoke to him twice before; when
he

he might have gone to Tigré with Michael his friend, he staid at Gondar with us: so you, of all others, have least reason to complain of him, since he has preferred you to the Ras, though you have given him nothing. As for riding, I with Yagoubé had just rode with you as much as with Tecla Haimanout, and you spent as much time with him as your predecessor did; last night's disgrace would not then have fallen upon us, at least would have been confined to the limits of your own kingdom; you would have neither disoblged Fasil nor the Iteghé; and, when the day of trial is at hand, you would have been better able to answer it, than, by going on at this rate, there is any appearance you will be." This person, I understood afterwards, was Ras Sanuda, nephew to the Iteghé, and son of Ras Welled de l'Oul; he had been banished to Kuara in the late king's time, so I had no opportunity of knowing him.

All the time of this harangue Socinios's eyes were mostly shut, and his mouth open, and flavering tobacco; he was rolling from side to side scarcely preserving his equilibrium. When Sanuda stopt, he began with an air of drollery, "You are very angry to-day, Baba." And turning to me, said, "To-morrow, see you bring me that horse which Yafine sent you to Koscam; and bring me Yafine himself, or you will hear of it; slave and Frank as you are, enemy to Mary the virgin, bring me the horse!" Sanuda took me
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by the hand, saying in a whisper, "Don't fear him, I am here; but go home; next time you come here you will have horses enough along with you." He, too, seemed in liquor; and, making me a sign to withdraw, I left the king and his minister together with great willingness, and returned to Koscam to the Iteghé, to whom I told what had passed, and who ordered me to stay near Ozoro Esther, as in her service, and go no more to the palace.

At this time certain intelligence was received that Ras Michael was arrived in Lasta with Guigarr, Shum, or chief of the clan called Waag, once a mortal enemy to Michael, though now at peace with him, and serving him as his conductor. Through his country is the only passage from Tigré to Begemder and Belessen, and many armies have perished by endeavouring to force it. Michael and the king now passed under the protection of Guigarr, notwithstanding Powussen had many parties among the other clans that wished to prevent him. On the 14th of December he forded the Tacazzè, and turned a little to the left, as if he intended to pass through the middle of Begemder, though he had really no such design, but only to bring Powussen to an engagement. Seeing this was not likely, and only tended to waste time, he pursued his journey strait towards Gondar, not in his usual way, burning and destroying, but quietly, correcting abuses, and regulating

gulating the police of the country through which he passed, for he was yet in fear.

The news of his having passed the Tacazzè determined Socinios and the Iteghé to fly; and they set out accordingly. Socinios directed his flight, first towards Begemder, but, the next day, turned to the right, through Dembea, and joined the queen at Azazo, where great altercations and disputes followed between them. The queen had engaged the Abuna to attend her, and that prelate had consented, upon receiving fifteen mules and thirty ounces of gold, which were paid accordingly: But when the queen sent, the morning of her departure, to put the Abuna in mind of his promise, his servants stoned the Iteghé's messenger, without suffering him to approach the house, but they kept the mules and the gold. The queen continued her flight to Degwassa, near the lake Tzana, and sent all that was valuable that she had brought with her, into the island of Dek.

Ayto Engedan and Confu were at hand at the head of large parties scouring the country, at once protecting the Iteghè, and securing as many of those of Socinios's people as were thought worthy of punishment. Sanuda, too, was in arms; and, throwing off the mask, was now acting under the immediate direction of Ras Michael, and had apprehended many of those noblemen of Tigrè who had revolted against the Ras, particularly distinguished for generosity, openness, and
affability

affability of manners; and Sebaat Laab and Keffa Mariam, men of great consideration in Michael's province. Confu and Sanuda having joined, entered Gondar, and took possession of the king's house, and put a stop to these excesses and robberies which had become very frequent since the Iteghè's flight.

One day, while I was sitting at Koscam, Yafine entered the court before the house, and, coming into the room, fell down and kissed the ground before me, after the manner they salute their superior. He told me he came from Ayto Confu, who ordered him to do homage to me as usual for the province of Ras el Feel, and that I was to come to him directly, and go out to meet the king, for several of his people were already arrived at Gondar. I sent him back to Ayto Confu with my respectful thanks, declined accepting of any office till I should see the king; and, as he himself had named the place to be Mariam-Ohha, I thought it was my duty to stay till he came there.

In the mean time the unfortunate Socinios continued his flight, in company with the queen, till they came to the borders of Kuara, her native country. Those who made Socinios a king had never made him a friend. It was here suggested, that his presence would infallibly occasion a pursuit which might endanger the queen, her country, and all her friends. Upon this it was resolved to abandon the unworthy Socinios to the
 soldiers,

soldiers, who stript him naked, giving him only a rag to cover him, and a good horse, and with these they dismissed him to seek his fortune.

After a short stay in Kuara, the queen turned to the left towards Burè. All Maitsha assembled to escort her to Fasil, while he led her through Damot to the frontiers of Gojam, where she was received in triumph by her daughter Ozoro Welleta Israel, and Ayto her grandson, to whom half of that province belonged, and with them she rested at last in safety, after a long and anxious journey.

On the 21st of December a message came to me from Ozoro Esther, desiring I would attend her son Confu to meet the king, as his Fit-Auraris had marked out the camp at Mariam-Ohha; observing, that I had a very indifferent knife or dagger in my girdle, (that which I had received from the king being stolen, when my house was plundered) with her own hands she made me a present of a magnificent one, mounted with gold which she had chosen with that intention, and laid upon the seat beside her. She told me she had already sent to acquaint her husband, Ras Michael, how much she had been obliged to me in his absence, both for my attention to her and her eldest son, who had been several times sick since his departure, and that I might expect to receive a kind reception.

C H A P.



C H A P. XXI.

The Author joins the Army at Mariam-Obba—Reception there—Universal Terror on the Approach of the Army—Several great Men of the Rebels apprehended and executed—Great Hardness of the King's Heart.

HAVING still some doubt about the propriety of going to Mariam-Obba, till the king had taken post there, I appointed with Ayto Confu to meet him next morning the 22d, in the plain below the church of Abbo, where is the pass called Semma Confu, the dangerous path, from its being always a place where banditti resort to rob passengers in unsettled times.

In my way through the town, though the day had scarce dawned, numbers of the king's servants, that had come from Tigrè, flocked about me with great demonstrations of joy; and, by the time I got into the plain below Abbo, I had already collected a strong party both of horse and foot. This was not my intention; I had set out unarmed,

unarmed, attended only by two Abyffinian servants on horseback, but without lance or shield, and in this manner I intended to present myself to the king as one of the suite of Ayto Confu : but all my endeavours were in vain ; and I saw that, making the best of my way, and profiting of the early time of the morning, was the only method left to avoid increasing my retinue. I must own the good disposition of these people to me, and the degree of favour they reported me to be in, and, above all, Ozoro Esther's assurances had given me great comfort ; for several people of no authority, indeed, had prophesied that Ras Michael would be much offended at my having thrown a carpet over the body of Joas, and at my not having gone to Tigré with him.

I passed the three heaps of stones under which lie the three monks who were stoned to death in the time of David IV. ; and at the bottom of the hill whereon stands the church of Abbo, I was met by Yafine, and about 20 horsemen, having on their coats of mail, their helmets upon their heads, and their viziers down ; their pikes perpendicular, with their points in the air, so that by one motion more, placing them horizontally in their rests, they were prepared to charge at a word. I asked Yafine what was the meaning of his being in that equipage in such hot weather, when there was no enemy ? He replied, It was given him in orders from Ayto Confu last night ; and that, with regard to an enemy, there was one that had seized the

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the pass of Semma Confu, and obstinately refused to let us through, unless we forced them. Sure, said I, Ayto Confu knows, that heavy armed-men on horseback are not fit to force passes through craggy mountains, where they may be all killed by rolling stones upon them, without their even seeing their enemy. Strange, strange, said I, (speaking to myself) that any party should be so audacious as to take post in the king's front, at six miles distance, and put themselves between him and the capital : I am sure they heartily deserve to be cut in pieces, and so they certainly will. Where is Ayto Confu ? It was answered by Yafine, That he was gone forward to the mouth of the pass to reconnoitre it, and would meet us there. We marched on accordingly, across the plain, about half a mile ; but I was surprised to see all my attendants, that I had picked up by the way, laughing, excepting Yafine's men, and that none of the rest made horse, mule, or gun ready as if they were in danger ; so that I began now strongly to suspect some trick on the part of Confu, as he was much given to jest and sport, being a very young man.

A little before we came to the mouth of the pass, a soldier came to us and asked who we were ? and was answered, it was Yafine, Ayto Confu's servant at Ras el Feel. To which it was replied, he knew no such person. He was scarcely gone when another arrived with the same question. I began to be impatient, as the sun was then growing

growing very hot ; and answered, It was Yagoubé, the white man, the king's friend and servant. I was again answered, No such person could pass there. The third time, being interrogated by one whom I knew to be Ayto Confu's servant, Yafine answered, it is Yagoubé, the king's governor of Ras el Feel, with the slave Yafine, the moor, come to do the king homage, and to die for him, if he commands, in the midst of his enemies. We were answered, He is welcome : upon which the servant, going back, brought a drum, and beat it upon the rock, crying as in a proclamation, " Yagoubé is Governor of Ras el Feel, Commander of the king's black horse, Lord of Geesh, and Gentleman of the king's bed-chamber." Here this farce, the contrivance of Ayto Confu, ended. With him were many more of the king's servants, my old acquaintances, and we all sat down by a spring-well, under the shade of the rock, to a hearty breakfast prepared for us by Ozoro Esther.

After this was finished with a great deal of cheerfulness, and being ready to get on horseback, we saw a man running towards us in great speed, who, upon his arrival, asked us where the king was, and if we were his Fit-Auraris ? To this we made him no answer ; but, laying hold of him, obliged him to declare his errand. He said that he was a servant of Negadé Ras Mahomet, of Dara, who had apprehended Ayto Confu, brother of Guebra Mehedin, of whom I have spoken at large,

large, (never for any good) and that he had brought him along with him. This miscreant, whom we had found out to be the principal actor and persuader of the robbery of my house, while in a drunken frolic with the wretched Socinios, was now in his way before the king, where, if all his delinquency had been known, he would infallibly have lost his eyes, his life, or both. He was nephew to the Iteghé, as has been already mentioned, son to her brother Bascha Eusebius, and consequently cousin-german to Ayto Confu himself, who, with great diffidence, asked me if I could pardon his cousin, and allow him to be delivered out of Mahomet's hands, which, ill as he deserved of me, I very readily complied with; for I would not for the world have had it thought that I was the occasion of his death, after it had been so often said, though falsely, that I had been the cause of that of his brother. Mahomet delivered him to Confu and me, without hesitation, and promised not to complain to Ras Michael; but he threatened, if ever again he fell into his hands, that he would certainly put him to death, which he well saw would not be very disagreeable to any of his relations, provided it happened in the field, or any other way than by the hands of a public executioner. Ayto Confu, however, insisted upon bringing him out, and correcting him publicly, though he was by ten years the younger of the two; and the wretch was accordingly severely whipt with wands, and delivered after to a servant
of

of Ozoro Esther's to conduct him to some safe place, where he might be out of the reach of Ras Michael, at least for a time.

We now got on horseback, and having ordered Yafne and his soldiers to disarm, we all went in the habit of peace, with joyful hearts, to meet the king, who was already arrived at Mariam-Ohba, and was encamped there since about eleven o'clock that forenoon.

My first business was to wait on Ras Michael, who, tho' very busy, admitted me immediately upon being announced. This was a compliment I was under no necessity of paying him, as the king's servant; but I was resolved to take nothing upon me, but appear in all the humility of a private stranger. This he quickly perceived, so that, when he saw me approaching near him to kiss the ground, he made an effort as if to rise, which he never did, being lame, nor could do without help; stretching out his hand as if to prevent me, repeated the words in a hurry, *be gueir, be gueir*, or, for God's sake don't, for God's sake don't. However, the compliment was paid. As soon as I arose, without desiring me to sit down, he asked aloud, Have you seen the king? I said, Not yet. Have you any complaint to make against any one, or grace to ask? I answered, None, but the continuance of your favour. He answered, That I am sure I owe you; go to the king. I took my leave. I had been jostled and almost squeezed to death attempting to enter, but a large room was made me for retiring.

The

The reception I had met with was the infallible rule according to which the courtiers were to speak to me from that time forward. Man is the same creature every where, although different in colour: the court of London and that of Abyssinia are, in their principles, one. I then went immediately to the king in the presence-chamber. His largest tent was crowded to a degree of suffocation; I resolved, therefore, to wait till this throng was over, and was going to my own tent, which my servants pitched near that of Kessa Yafous, by that general's own desire, but before I could reach it I was called by a servant from the king. Though the throng had greatly decreased, there was still a very crowded circle.

The king was sitting upon an ivory stool, such as are represented upon ancient medals; he had got this as a present from Arabia since he went to Tigre; he was plainly, but very neatly dressed, and his hair combed and perfumed. When I kissed the ground before him, "There, says he, is an arch rebel, what punishment shall we inflict upon him?" "Your majesty's justice, said I, will not suffer you to inflict any punishment upon me that can possibly equal the pleasure I feel this day at seeing you sitting there." He smiled with great good nature, giving me first the back, and then the palm of his hand to kiss. He then made me a sign to stand in my place, which I immediately did for a moment; and, seeing he was then upon business, which I knew nothing of, I took leave

of him, and could not help reflecting, as I went, that, of all the vast multitude then in my sight, I was, perhaps, the only one destitute either of hope or fear.

All Gondar, and the neighbouring towns and villages, had poured out their inhabitants to meet the king upon his return. The fear of Ras Michael was the cause of all this; and every one trembled, lest, by being absent, he should be thought a favourer of Socinios.

The side of the hill, which slopes gently from Belessen, is here very beautiful; it is covered thick with herbage down to near the foot, where it ends in broken rocks. The face of this hill is of great extent, exposed to the W. and S. W.; a small, but clear-running stream, rising in Belessen, runs through the middle of it, and falls into the Mogetch. It is not considerable, being but a brook, called Mariam-Ohha, (i. e. the water of Mariam) from a church dedicated to the Virgin, near where it rises in Belessen; an infinite number of people spread themselves all over the hill, covered with cotton garments as white as snow. The number could not be less than 50 or 60,000 men and women, all strewed upon the grass promiscuously. Most of these had brought their victuals with them, others trusted to their friends and acquaintances in the army; the soldiers had plenty of meat; as soon as the king had crossed the Sacazzé all was lawful prize; and though they did not murder or burn, as was Michael's custom

custom in his former marches, yet they drove away all the cattle they could seize, either in Begember or Belesen. Besides this, a great quantity of provisions of every sort poured in from the neighbourhood of Gondar, in presents to the king and great men, though there was really famine in that capital, by the roads being every way obstructed; there was plenty, however, in the camp.

It was the month of December, the fairest time of the year, when the sun was in the southern tropic, and no danger from rain in the day, nor in the night from dew; so that, if the remembrance of the past had not hung heavy on some hearts, it was a party of pleasure, of the most agreeable kind, to convoy the king to his capital. The priests from all the convents for many miles round, in dresses of yellow and white cotton, came, with their crosses and drums, in procession, and greatly added to the variety of the scene. Among these were 300 of the monks of Koscam, with their large crosses, and kettle drums of silver, the gift of the Itgehé in the days of her splendour; at present it was very doubtful what their future fate was to be, after their patroness had fled from Koscam. But what most drew the attention of all ranks of people, was the appearance of the Abuna and Itchegué, whose character, rank, and dignity exempted them from leaving Gondar to meet the king himself; but they were then in the form of criminals, and were treated with very

little respect or ceremony by the soldiers, who considered them as enemies.

It will be remembered, upon a report being spread just after the election of Socinios, that Ras Michael's affairs were taking an adverse turn while besieging the mountain Haramat; that the Abuna, Itchegué, and Acab Saat, had solemnly excommunicated the king, Ras Michael, and all their adherents, declaring them accursed, and absolving all people from their allegiance to Tecla Haimanout. But as soon as the king began his march from Tigré, application for pardon was made through every channel possible, and it was not without great difficulty that Ras Michael could be brought to pardon them, chiefly by the entreaty of Ozoro Esther. But this mortification was prescribed to them as a condition of forgiveness, that they should meet the king at Mariam-Ohha, not with drums and crosses, or a retinue, but in the habit and appearance of supplicants. Accordingly they both came by the time the king had alighted; but they brought no tent with them, nor was any pitched for them, nor any honour shewn them.

The Abuna had with him a priest, or monk, on a mule, and two beggarly-looking servants on foot; the Itchegué two monks, that looked like servants, distinguished by a cowl only on their heads; they were both kept waiting till past three o'clock, and then were admitted, and sharply rebuked by the Ras: they after went to the king, who

who presently dismissed them without saying a word to either, or without allowing them to be seated in his presence, which both of them, by their rank, were intitled to be. I asked the Abuna to make use of my tent to avoid the sun; this he willingly accepted of, was crest-fallen a little, spoke very lowly and familiarly; said he had always a regard for me, which I had no reason to believe; desired me to speak favourable of him before the King and the Ras, which I promised faithfully to do. I ordered coffee, which he drank with great pleasure, during which he gave me several hints, as if he thought his pardon was not compleated; and at last asked me directly what were my sentiments, and what I had heard? I said, I believed every thing was favourable as to him and the Itchegue, but I did not know how much farther the king's forgiveness would extend. I know, says he, what you mean; that Abba Salama, (curse upon him) he is the author of it all: What do I know of these black people, who am a stranger, so lately come into the country? and, indeed, he seemed to know very little; for besides his native Arabic, which he spoke like a peasant, he had not learned one word of any of the various languages used in the country in which he was to live and die. Having finished coffee, I left him speaking to some of his own people; about half an hour afterwards, he went away.

Ras Michael had brought with him from Tigre about 20,000 men, the best soldiers of the empire; about

about 6000 of these were musqueteers, about 12,000 armed with lances and shields, and about 6000 men had joined them from Gondar; a large proportion of these were horsemen, who were scouring the country in all directions, bringing with them such unhappy people as deserved to be, and were therefore destined for public example.

The short way from Tigré to Gondar was by Lamalmon, (that is the mountain of Samen) and by Woggora. Ayto Tesfos had maintained himself in the government of Samen since Joas's time, by whom he was appointed; he had continued constantly in enmity with Ras Michael, and had now taken possession of the passes near the Taccaze, so as to cut off all communication between Gondar and Tigré. On the side of Belesén, between Lalta and Begemder, was Ras Michael and his army. Powullen and the Begemder troops cut off the road to Gosam by Foggora and Dara. Ayto Engedai, who was to be considered as an advanced post of Fasil, was at Tihemmera, in the way of the Agow and Maitha, and Coque Abou Barca on the N. W. side, towards Kura; so that Gondar was so completely invested, that several of the people died with hunger.

Ras Michael had ordered his own nephew, Teda and Wessera Michael, the king's master of the household, to endeavour to force their way from Tigré to Woggora, and open that communication, if possible, with Gondar; and for that purpose

purpose had left him 4000 men in the province of Siré, on the other side of the Tacazzé; and now scarce was his tent pitched at Mariam-Ohha, when he detached Kessa Yafous with 600 men to force a junction with Michael and Tecla from the Woggora side. Their orders were, if possible, to draw Tesfos to an engagement, but not to venture to storm him in the mountain; for Tesfos's principal post, the Jews Rock, was inaccessible, where he had plowed and sowed plentifully for his subsistence, and had a quantity of the purest running-water at all seasons of the year: to irritate Tesfos more, Kessa Yafous was then named governor of Samen in his place. This brave and active officer had set out immediately for his command, and it was to me the greatest disappointment possible, that I did not see him.

Although Ras Michael had been in council all night, the signal was made to strike the tents at the first dawn of day, and soon after, the whole army was in motion; the council had been in the Ras's tent, not in presence of the king, with whom I had staid the most part of the evening, indeed, till late in the night; he seemed to have lost all his former gaiety, and to be greatly troubled in mind; inquired much about the Iteghé, and Fasil; told me he had sent his assurance of peace to the Iteghé, and desired her not to leave Koscam; but she had returned for answer, that she could not trust Michael, after the threatnings he had sent against her from Tigré. It was observed also, in
this

this day's march, that, contrary to his custom before crossing the Adazzat, he received all that came out to meet him with a sullen countenance, and scarce ever answered or spake to them. Michael also, every day since the same date, had put on his behaviour more and more severe and brutal. He had enough of this at all times.

It was the 23d of December when we encamped on the Mogetch, just below Gondar. This behaviour was so conspicuous to the whole people, that no sooner were the tents pitched, (it being about eleven o'clock) than they all stole homie to Gondar in small parties without their dinner, and presently a report was spread that the king and his Michael came determined to burn the town, and put the inhabitants all to the sword. This occasioned the utmost consternation, and caused many to fly to Fasil. As for me, the king's behaviour shewed me plainly all was not right, and an accident in the way confirmed it. He had desired me to ride before him, and shew him the horse I had got from Fasil, which I was then in great beauty and order, and which I had kept purposely for him. It happened that, crossing the deep bed of a brook, a plank of the kamuffa hung across it. I had upon my shoulders a white goat skin, of which it did not take hold, but the king, who was dressed in the habit of peace, his long hair floating all around his face, wrapt up in his mantle, or thin cotton cloak, so that nothing but his eyes could be seen,

was paying more attention to the horse than to the branch of kantuffa beside him; it took first hold of his hair, and the fold of the cloak that covered his head, then spread itself over his whole shoulder in such a manner, that, notwithstanding all the help that could be given him, and that I had, at first seeing it, cut the principal bough asunder with my knife, no remedy remained but he must throw off the upper garment, and appear in the under one, or waistcoat, with his head and face bare before all the spectators.

This is accounted great disgrace to a king, who always appears covered in public. However, he did not seem to be ruffled, nor was there any thing particular in his countenance more than before, but with great composure; and in rather a low voice, he called twice, Who is the Shum of this district? Unhappily he was not far off. A thin old man of sixty, and his son about thirty, came trotting, as their custom is, naked to their girdle, and stood before the king, who was, by this time, quite clothed again. What had struck the old man's fancy, I know not, but he passed my horse laughing, and seemingly wonderfully content with himself. I could not help considering him as a type of mankind in general, never more confident and careless than when on the brink of destruction; the king asked if he was Shum of that place? he answered in the affirmative, and added, which was not asked of him, that the other was his son.

There

There is always near the king, when he marches, an officer called Kanitz Kitzera, the executioner of the camp; he has upon the fore of his saddle a quantity of thongs made of bull hide, rolled up very artificially, this is called the *tarade*. The king made a sign with his head, and another with his hand, without speaking, and two loops of the *tarade* were instantly thrown round the Shum and his son's neck, and they were both hoisted upon the same tree, the *tarade* cut, and the end made fast to a branch. They were both left hanging, but I thought so awkwardly, that they should not die for some minutes, and might surely have been saved had any one dared to cut them down; but fear had fallen upon every person who had not attended the king to Tigré. This cruel beginning seemed to me an omen, that violent resolutions had been taken, the execution of which was immediately to follow; for though the king had certainly a delight in the shedding of human blood in the field, yet till that time I never saw him order an execution by the hands of the hangman; on the contrary, I have often seen him shudder and express disgust, lowly and in half words, at such executions ordered every day by Ras Michael. In this instance he seemed to have lost that feeling; and rode on, sometimes conversing about Fasil's horse, or other indifferent subjects, to those who were around him, without once reflecting upon the horrid execution he had then so recently occasioned.

In

In the evening of the 23d, when encamped upon the Mogetch, came Sanuda, the person who had made Socinios king, and who had been Ras under him; he was received with great marks of favour, in reward of the treacherous part he had acted. He brought with him prisoners, Guebra Denghel, the Ras's son-in-law, one of the best and most amiable men in Abyssinia, but who had unfortunately embraced the wrong side of the question; and with him Sebat Laab and Kessa Mariam, both men of great families in Tigre. These were, one after the other, thrown violently on their faces before the king. I was exceedingly distressed for Guebra Denghel; he prayed the king with the greatest earnestness to order him to be put to death before the door of his tent, and not delivered to his cruel father-in-law. To this the king made no answer, nor did he show any signs of pity, but waved his hand, as a sign to carry them to Ras Michael, where they were put in custody and loaded with irons.

About two hours later came Ayton Aylo, son of Kasmati Eshè, whom the king had named governor of Begemder; he brought with him Chremat, brother to Socinios, and Abba Salama the Acab Saat, who had excommunicated his father, and been instrumental in his murder by Fasil. I had a great curiosity to see how they would treat the Acab Saat, for my head was full of what I had read in the European books of exemption

that churchmen had in this country from the jurisdiction of the civil power.

Aylo had made his legs to be tied under the mule's belly, his hands behind his back, and a rope made fast to them, which a man held in his hand on one side, while another led the halter of the mule on the other, both of them with lances in their hands. Chremation had his hands bound, but his legs were not tied, nor was there any rope made fast to his hands by which he was held. While they were untying Abba Salama, I went into the presence-chamber, and stood behind the king's chair. Very soon after Aylo's men brought in their prisoners, and, as is usual, threw them down violently with their faces to the ground; their hands being bound behind them, they had a very rude fall upon their faces.

The Arab Saat rose in a violent passion, he struggled to get loose his hands, that he might be free to use the act of denouncing excommunication, which is by lifting the right hand, and extending the fore-finger; finding that impossible, he cried out, Unloose my hands, or you are all excommunicated. It was with difficulty he could be prevailed upon to hear the king, who with great composure, or rather indifference, said to him, You are the first ecclesiastical officer in my household, you are the third in the whole kingdom; but I have not yet learned you ever had power to curse your sovereign, or exhort his subjects to murder him. You are to be tried for this crime

crime by the judges to-morrow, so prepare to shew in your defence, upon what precepts of Christ, or his apostles, or upon what part of the general councils, you found your title to do this.

Let my hands be unloosed, cries Salama violently; I am a priest, a servant of God; and they have power, says David, to put kings in chains, and nobles in irons. And did not Samuel hew king Agag to pieces before the Lord? I excommunicate you, Tecla Haimanout. And he was going on, when Tecla Mariam, son of the king's secretary, a young man, struck the Acab Saat so violently on the face, that it made his mouth gush out with blood, saying, at the same time, What! suffer this in the king's presence? Upon which both Chremation and the Acab Saat were hurried out of the tent without being suffered to say more; indeed the blow seemed to have so much disconcerted Abba Salama, that it deprived him for a time of the power of speaking.

In Abyssinia it is death to strike, or lift the hand to strike, before the king; but in this case the provocation was so great, so sudden, and unexpected, and the youth's worth and the insolence of the offender so apparent to every body, that a slight reproof was ordered to be given to Tecla Mariam (by his father only) but he lost no favour for what he had done; either with the King, Michael, or the people.

When

When the two prisoners were carried before the Ras, he refused to see them, but loaded them with irons, and committed them to close custody. That night a council was held in the king's tent, but it broke early up; afterwards another before the Ras, which sat much later; the reason was, that the first, where the king was, only arranged the business of to-morrow, while that before the Ras considered all that was to be done or likely to happen at any time.

On the 24th the drum beat, and the army was on their march by dawn of day: they halted a little after passing the rough ground, and then doubled their ranks, and formed into close order of battle, the king leading the center; a few of his black horse were in two lines immediately before him, their spears pointed upwards, his officers and nobility on each side, and behind him the rest of the horse, distributed in the wings, excepting prince George and Ayto Confu, who, with two small bodies, not exceeding a hundred, scoured the country, sometimes in the front, and sometimes in the flank. I do not remember who commanded the rest of the army, my mind was otherwise engaged; they marched close and in great order, and every one trembled for the fate of Gondar. We passed the Mahometan town, and encamped upon the river Kahha, in front of the market place. As soon as we had turned our faces to the town, our kettle-drums were brought to the front, and,

after beating some time, two proclamations were made. The first was, That all those who had flour or barley in quantities, should bring it that very day to a fair market, on pain of having their houses plundered; and that all people, soldiers, or others, who attempted by force to take any provisions without having first paid for them in ready money, should be hanged upon the spot. A bench was quickly brought, and set under a tree in the middle of the market; a judge appointed to sit there; a strong guard, and several officers placed round him; behind him an executioner, and a large coil of ropes laid at his feet. The second proclamation was, That every body should remain at home in their houses, otherwise the person flying, or deserting the town, should be reputed a rebel, his goods confiscated, his house burnt, and his family chastised at the king's pleasure for seven years; so far was well and politic.

There was at Gondar a sort of mummings, being a mixture of buffoons and ballad-singers, and posture-masters. These people, upon all public occasions, run about the streets, and on private ones, such as marriages, come to the court yards before the houses, where they dance, and sing songs of their own composing in honour of the day, and perform all sorts of antics: many a time, on his return from the field with victory, they had met Ras Michael, and received his bounty for singing his praises, and welcoming him upon his
return

return home. The day the Abuna excommunicated the king, this set of vagrants made part of the solemnity; they abused, ridiculed, and traduced Michael in lampoons and scurrilous rhymes, calling him crooked, lame, old, and impotent, and several other opprobrious names, which did not affect him near so much as the ridicule of his person: upon many occasions after, they repeated this, and particularly in a song they ridiculed the horse of Siré, who had run away at the battle of Limjour, where Michael cried out, Send these horse to the mill. It happened that these wretches, men and women, to the number of about thirty and upwards, were then, with very different songs, celebrating Ras Michael's return to Gondar. The King and Ras, after the proclamation, had just turned to the right to Aylo Meidan, below the palace, a large field where the troops encamped. Confu and the king's household troops were before, and about 200 of the Siré horse were behind; on a signal made by the Ras, these horse turned short and fell upon the fingers, and cut them all to pieces. In less than two minutes they were all laid dead upon the field, excepting one young man, who, mortally wounded, had just strength enough to arrive within twenty yards of the king's horse, and there fell dead without speaking a word.

All the people present, most of them veteran soldiers, and consequently inured to blood, appeared shocked and disgusted at this wanton piece
of

of cruelty. For my part, a kind of faintness, or feebleness, had taken possession of my heart, ever since the execution of the two men on our march about the kantuffa; and this second act of cruelty occasioned such a horror, joined with an absence of mind, that I found myself unable to give an immediate answer, though the king had spoken twice to me.

It was about nine o'clock in the morning when we entered Gondar; every person we met on the street wore the countenance of a condemned malefactor; the Ras went immediately to the palace with the king, who retired, as usual, to a kind of cage or lattice-window, where he always sits unseen when in council. We were then in the council-chamber, and four of the judges seated; none of the governors of provinces were present but Ras Michael, and Kasmati Teslos of Sire. Abba Salama was brought to the foot of the table without irons, at perfect liberty. The accuser for the king (it is a post in this country in no great estimation) began the charge against him with great force and eloquence: he stated, one by one, the crimes committed by him at different periods, the sum of which amounted to prove Salama to be the greatest monster upon earth: among these were various kinds of murder, especially by poison; incest, with every degree collateral and descendant. He concluded this black, horrid list, with the charge of high treason, or cursing the king, and absolving his subjects from their allegi-

ance, which he stated as the greatest crime human nature was capable of, as involving in its consequences all sorts of other crimes. Abba Salama, though he seemed under very great impatience, did not often interrupt him, further than, *Tou lie*, and, *It is a lie*, which he repeated at every new charge. His accuser had not said one word of the murder of Joas, but passed it over without the smallest allusion to it.

In this, however, Abba Salama did not follow his example: being desired to answer in his own defence, he entered upon it with great dignity, and an air of superiority, very different from his behaviour in the king's tent the day before: he laughed, and made extremely light of the charges on the article of women, which he neither confessed nor denied; but said these might be crimes among the Franks, (looking at me) or other Christians, but not the Christians of that country, who lived under a double dispensation, the law of Moses and the law of Christ: he said the Abyssinians were *Beni Israel*, as indeed they call themselves, that is, Children of Israel; and that in every age the patriarchs had acted as he did, and were not less beloved of God. He went roundly into the murder of Joas, and of his two brothers, Adigo and Aylo, on the mountain of Wechné, and charged Michael directly with it, as also with the poisoning the late Hatzé Hannes, father of the present king.

The

The Ras seemed to avoid hearing, sometimes by speaking to people standing behind him, sometimes by reading a paper; in particular, he asked me, standing directly behind his chair, in a low voice, What is the punishment in your country for such a crime? It was his custom to speak to me in his own language of Tigré, and one of his greatest pastimes to laugh at my faulty expression. He spake this to me in Amharic, so I knew he wanted my answer should be understood: I therefore said, in the same low tone of voice he had spoke to me, High-treason is punished with death in all the countries I have ever known.—This I owed to Abba Salama, and it was not long before I had my return.

Abba Salama next went into the murder of Kasmati Eshtë, which he confessed he was the promoter of. He said the Iteghé, with her brothers and Ayto Aylo, had all turned Franks, so had Gusho of Amhara; and that, in order to make the country Catholic, they had sent for priests, who lived with them in confidence, as that Frank did, pointing to me: that it was against the law of the country, that I should be suffered here; that I was accursed, and should be stoned as an enemy to the Virgin Mary. There the Ras interrupted him, by saying, Confine yourself to your own defence; clear yourself first, and then accuse any one you please: it is the king's intention to put the law in execution against all offenders,

and it is only as believing you the greatest that he has begun with you.

This calmness of the Ras seemed to disconcert the Acab Saat; he lost all method; he warned the Ras that it was owing to his excommunicating Kasmati Eshté that room was made for him to come to Gondar; without that event this king would never have been upon the throne, so that he had still done them as much good by his excommunications as he had done them harm: he told Ras, and the judges that they were all doubly under a curse, if they offered either to pull out his eyes, or cut out his tongue; and prayed them, bursting into tears, not so much as to think of either, if it was only for old fellowship, or friendship which had long subsisted between them.

There is an officer named Kal Hatzé who stands always upon steps at the side of the lattice-window, where there is a hole covered in the inside with a curtain of green taffeta; behind this curtain the king sits, and through this hole he sends what he has to say to the Board, who rise and receive the messenger standing: he had not interfered till now, when the officer said, addressing himself to Abba Salama, "The king requires of you to answer directly why you persuaded the Abuna to excommunicate him? the Abuna is a slave of the Turks, and has no king; you are born under a monarchy, why did you, who are his inferior in office, take upon you to advise him at all? or why, after having presumed to advise him, did

did you advise him wrong, and abuse his ignorance in these matters?" This question, which was a home one, made him lose all his temper; he cursed the Abuna, called him Mahometan, Pagan, Frank, and Infidel; and was going on in this wild manner, when Tecla Haimanout*, the eldest of the judges, got up, and addressing himself to the Ras, It is no part of my duty to hear all this railing, he has not so much as offered one fact material to his exculpation.

The king's secretary sent up to the window the substance of his defence, the criminal was carried at some distance to the other end of the room, and the judges deliberated whilst the king was reading. Very few words were said among the rest; the Ras was all the time speaking to other people: after he had ended this, he called upon the youngest judge to give his opinion, and he gave it, "He is guilty, and should die;" the same said all the officers, and after them the judges, and the same said Kaimati Tesfos after them. When it came to Ras Michael to give his vote, he affected moderation; he said that he was accused for being his enemy and accomplice; in either case, it is not fair that he should judge him. No superior officer being present, the last voice remained with the king, who sent Kal Hatzè to the Board with his sentence; "He is guilty and *shall die the death.*—The hangman

* The same whose foot was hurt by Strates's mule in the campaign of Mairsha.

shall hang him upon a tree *to-day*.' The unfortunate Acab Saat was immediately hurried away by the guards to the place of execution, which is a large tree before the king's gate; where uttering, to the very last moment, curses against the king, the Ras, and the Abuna, he suffered the death he very richly deserved, being hanged in the very vestments in which he used to sit before the king, without one ornament of his civil or sacerdotal pre-eminence having been taken from him before the execution. In going to the tree he said he had 400 cows, which he bequeathed to some priests to say prayers for his soul; but the Ras ordered them to be brought to Gondar, and distributed among his soldiers.

I have entered into a longer detail of this trial, at the whole of which I assisted, the rather that I might ask this question of those that maintain the absolute independence of the Abyssinian priesthood, Whether, if the many instances already mentioned have not had the effect, this one does not fully convince them, that all ecclesiastical persons are subject to the secular power in Abyssinia as much as they are in Britain or any European Protestant state whatever?

Chremation, Socinios's brother, was next called, he seemed half dead with fear; he only denied having any concern in his brother being elected king. He said he had no post, and in this he spoke the truth, but confessed that he had been sent by Abba Salama to bring the Itcheguè and the

Abuna

Abuna to meet him the day of excommunication at Dippabye. It was further unluckily proved against him, that he was present with his brother at plundering the houses in the night-time when the man was killed; and upon this he was sentenced to be immediately hanged; the court then broke up and went to breakfast. All this had passed in less than two hours; it was not quite eleven o'clock when all was over, but Ras Michael had sworn he would not taste bread till Abba Salama was hanged, and on such occasions he never broke his word.

Immediately after this last execution the kettle-drums beat at the palace-gate, and the crier made this proclamation, "That all lands and villages, which are now, or have been given to the Abuna by the king, shall revert to the king's own use, and be subject to the government, or the Cantiba of Dembea, or such officers as the king shall after appoint in the provinces where they are situated."

I went home, and my house being but a few yards from the palace, I passed the two unfortunate people hanging upon the same branch; and, full of the cruelty of the scene I had witnessed, which I knew was but a preamble to much more, I determined firmly, at all events, to quit this country.

The next morning came on the trial of the unfortunate Guebra Denghel, Sebaat Laab, and Kessa Mariam; the Ras claimed his right of trying

ing these three at his own house, as they were
 all three subjects of his government of Tigré.
 Guebra Denghel bore his hard fortune with great
 unconcern, declaring, that his only reason of tak-
 ing up arms against the king was, that he saw no
 other way of preventing Michael's tyranny, and
 monstrous thirst of money and of power: that the
 Ras was really king, had subverted the constitu-
 tion, annihilated all difference of rank and per-
 sons, and transferred the efficient parts of govern-
 ment into the hands of his own creatures. He
 wished the king might know this was his only mo-
 tive for rebellion, and that unless it had been to
 make this declaration, he would not have opened
 his mouth before so partial and unjust a judge as
 he considered Michael to be.
 But Welleta Selassé, his daughter, hearing the
 danger her father was in, broke suddenly out of
 Oromo Elthier's apartment, which was contiguous;
 and coming into the council-room at the instant
 her father was condemned to die, threw herself at
 the Ras's feet with every mark and expression of
 the most extreme sorrow. I cannot, indeed, re-
 port what her expressions were, as I was not pre-
 sent; and I thank God that I was not; I believe
 they are ineffable by any mouth but her own, but
 they were perfectly unsuccessful. The old tyrant
 threatened her with immediate death, spurned her
 away with his foot, and in her hearing ordered
 her father to be immediately hanged. Welleta
 Selassé, in a fit, or faint, which resembled death,
 fell

fell speechless to the ground ; the father, forgetful of his own situation, flew to his daughter's assistance, and they were both dragged out at separate doors, the one to death, the other to after sufferings, greater than death itself.

Fortune seemed to have taken delight, from very early life, constantly to traverse the greatness and happiness of this young lady. She was first destined to be married to Joas, and the affair was near concluded, when the fatal discovery, made at the battle of Azazo, that the king had sent his household troops privately to fight for Fasil against Michael, prevented her marriage, and occasioned his death. She was then destined to old Hatzé Hannes, Tecla Haimanout's father :

Michael, who found himself incapable of being a king, judged him as incapable of being a husband to a woman of the youth and charms of Welleta Selassé, and, therefore, deprived him at once of his life, crown, and bride. She was now not seventeen, and it was designed she should be married to the present king ; Providence put a stop to a union that was not agreeable to either party : she died some time after this, before the battle of Serbraxos ; being strongly pressed to gratify the brutal inclinations of the Ras her grandfather, in whom, when she could not resist or avoid, she took poison ; others said it was given her by Ozoro Esther from jealousy, but this was certainly without foundation. I saw her in her last moments, but too late to give her any assistance ;
and

and she had told her women-servants and slaves that she had taken arsenic, having no other way to avoid committing so monstrous a crime as incest with the murderer of her father.

The rage that the intercession of the daughter for her father Guebra Denghel had put the Ras into, was seen in the severity of the sentence he passed upon the other two criminals; Kessa Mariam's eyes were pulled out, Sebaat Laab's eyelids were cut off by the roots, and both of them were exposed in the market-place to the burning sun without any covering whatever. Sebaat Laab died of a fever in a few days; Kessa Mariam lived, if not to see, at least to hear, that he was revenged, after the battle of Serbraxos, by the disgrace and captivity of Michael.

I will spare myself the disagreeable task of shocking my readers with any further account of these horrid cruelties; enough has been said to give an idea of the character of these times and people. Blood continued to be spilt as water, day after day, till the Epiphany; priests, lay men, young men and old, noble and vile, daily found their end by the knife or the cord. Fifty-seven people died publicly by the hand of the executioner in the course of a very few days; many disappeared, and were either murdered privately, or sent to prisons, no one knew where.

The bodies of those killed by the sword were hewn to pieces and scattered about the streets, being denied burial. I was miserable, and almost driven

driven to despair, at seeing my hunting-dogs, twice let loose by the carelessness of my servants, bringing into the court-yard the head and arms of slaughtered men; and which I could no way prevent but by the destruction of the dogs themselves; the quantity of carrion, and the stench of it, brought down the hyenas in hundreds from the neighbouring mountains; and, as few people in Gondar go out after it is dark, they enjoyed the streets to themselves, and seemed ready to dispute the possession of the city with the inhabitants. Often when I went home late from the palace, and it was this time the king chose chiefly for conversation, though I had but to pass the corner of the market-place before the palace, had lanterns with me, and was surrounded with armed men, I heard them grunting by two's and three's so near me as to be afraid they would take some opportunity of seizing me by the leg; a pistol would have frightened them, and made them speedily run; and I constantly carried two loaded at my girdle, but the discharging a pistol in the night would have alarmed every one that heard it in the town, and it was not now the time to add any thing to people's fears. I at last scarce ever went out, and nothing occupied my thoughts but how to escape from this bloody country by way of Sennaar, and how I could best exert my power and influence over Yafine at Ras el Feel to pave my way, by assisting me to pass the desert into Athara.

The

The king missing me some days at the palace, and hearing I had not been at Ras Michael's, began to inquire who had been with me. Ayto Confu soon found Yafine, who informed him of the whole matter; upon this I was sent for to the palace, where I found the king, without any body but menial servants. He immediately remarked that I looked very ill; which, indeed, I felt to be the case, as I had scarcely ate or slept since I saw him last, or even for some days before. He asked me, in a condoling tone, What ailed me? that, besides looking sick, I seemed as if something had ruffled me, and put me out of humour. I told him that what he observed was true: that, coming across the market-place, I had seen Mariam, the Ras's doorkeeper, with three men bound, one of whom he fell a-hacking to pieces in my presence. Upon seeing me running across the place, stopping my nose, he called me to stay till he should come and dispatch the two, for he wanted to speak to me, as if he had been engaged about ordinary business: that the soldiers, in consideration of his haste, immediately fell upon the other two, whose cries were still remaining in my ears: that the hyænas at night would scarcely let me pass into the streets when I returned from the palace; and the dogs fled into my house to eat pieces of human carcases at leisure.

Although his intention was to look grave, I saw it was all he could do to stifle a laugh at grievances he thought very little of. "The men

men you saw with Za Mariam just now, says he, are rebels, sent by Kessa Yafous for examples : he has forced a junction with Tecla and Welleta Michael in Samen, and a road is now open through Woggora, and plenty established in Gondar. The men you saw suffer were those that cut off the provisions from coming into the city ; they have occasioned the death of many poor people ; as for the hyæna he never meddles with living people, he seeks carrion, and will soon clear the streets of those incumbrances that so much offend you ; people say that they are the Falasha of the mountains, who take that shape of the hyæna, and come down into the town to eat Christian flesh in the night.” — “ If they depend upon Christian flesh, and eat no other, said I, perhaps the hyænas of Gondar will be the worst fed of any in the world.” “ True, says he, bursting out into a loud laughter, that may be, few of those that die by the knife any where are Christians, or have any religion at all ; why then should you mind what they suffer ?” — “ Sir, said I, that is not my sentiment ; if you was to order a dog to be tortured to death before me every morning, I could not bear it. The carcases of Abba Salama, Guebra Denghel, and the rest, are still hanging where they were upon the tree ; you smell the stench of them at the palace-gate, and will soon I apprehend, in the palace itself. This cannot be pleasant, and I do assure you it must be very pernicious to your health, if there

was

was nothing else in it. At the battle of Fagitta, though you had no intention to retreat, yet you went half a day backward, to higher ground, and purer air, to avoid the stench of the field, but here in the city you heap up carrion about your houses, where is your continual residence."

"The Ras has given orders, says he gravely, to remove all the dead bodies before the Epiphany, when we go down to keep that festival, and wash away all this pollution in the clear-running water of the Kahha: but tell me now, Yagoube, is it really possible that you can take such things as these so much to heart? You are a brave man; we all know you are, and have seen it: we have all blamed you, stranger as you are in this country, for the little care you take of yourself; and yet about these things you are as much affected as the most cowardly woman, girl, or child could be."—"Sir, said I, I do not know if I am brave or not; but if to see men tortured or murdered, or to live among dead bodies without concern, be courage, I have it not, nor desire to have it: war is the profession of noble minds; it is a glorious one; it is the science and occupation of kings; and many wise and humane men have dedicated their whole life to the study of it in every country; it softens men's manners, by obliging them to society, to assist, befriend, and even save one another, though at their own risk and danger. A barbarian of that profession should be pointed at. Observe Ayto Engedan, (who

(who came at that very instant into the room) there is a young man, said I, who, with the bravery, has also the humanity and gentleness of my countrymen that are soldiers."

Engedan fell on his face before the king, as is usual, while the king went on seriously—"War you want; do you, Yagoube? war you shall have; it is not far distant, and Engedan is come to tell us how near." They then went into a considerable conversation about Gusho, Powuffen, and the preparations they were making, and where they were, with which I shall not trouble the reader, as I shall have an occasion to speak of the particulars afterwards as they arise. "I want Confu, says the king; I want him to send his men of Ras el Feel to Sennaar, and to the Baharnagash to get horses and some coats of mail. And what do you think of sending Yagoube there? he knows their manners and their language, and has friends there to whom he is intending to escape, without so much as asking my leave."—"Pardon me, Sir, said I; if I have ever entertained that thought, it is proof sufficient of the extreme necessity I am under to go." "Sir, says Engedan, I have rode in the Koccob horse; I will do so again, if Yagoube commands them, and will stay with us till we try the horse of Begemder. I have eight or ten coats of mail, which I will give your majesty: they belonged to my father, Confu, and I took them lately from that thief Abou Barea, with

with whom they were left at my father's death ; ~~but~~ I will tell your Majesty, I had rather fight ~~without~~ without a coat of mail, than that you should send Yagoube to ~~Sennaar~~ to purchase them from thence, for he will never return."

Ras Michael was now announced, and we made haste to get away. I would have Confu, Engedan, and you, come here to-morrow night, says the king, as soon as it is dark ; and do not you, Yagoube, for your life, speak one word of Sennaar, till you know my will upon it. He said this in the sternest manner, and with all the dignity and majesty of a king.

We passed the Ras in the anti-chamber, attended by a great many people. We endeavoured to slide by him in the crowd, but he noticed us, and brought us before him. We both kissed his hands, and he kept hold of mine, while he asked Engedan, " Is Fafil at Ibaba ? " to which he was answered, " Yes. " " Who is with him ? says the Ras. " — " Damot, Agow, and Maitsha, " answered Engedan. " Was you there ? says the Ras. " " No, answered Engedan, I am at Tshemera, with few men. " He then turned to me, and said, " My son is ill ; Ozoro Esther has just sent to me, and complains you visit her now no more. Go see the boy, and don't neglect Ozoro Esther, she is one of your best friends. " I inquired if she was at Gondar, and was answered, No ; she is at Koscam. We parted ; Engedan
went

went to Kofcam to Ozoro Efther's, and I went home to plan my route to Sennaar, and to prepare letters for Hagi Belal, a merchant there, to whom I was recommended from Arabia Felix.

C H A P. XXIII.

*The King promises Leave to the Author to depart—
 Receives a Reinforcement from Sboa—Amiable
 Carriage of Amba Tasous—Striking Contrast be-
 tween him and a Prince of the Galla—Bad State
 of the King's Affairs.*

IT was the 31st of December that we were at Koscama. A proclamation had been made some days before of a general pardon to all that would return to Gondar; but no one had ventured but Ayse Engedan, who was with Fasil as the king's friend; nor were any of those who went with Fasil, the object of the proclamation, for it was not thought that the retiring from Socinios with Fasil was doing any thing against their allegiance.

That night the bodies of Guebra Denghel, Kefla Mariam, and Sebaat Laab, were taken down from the tree and laid upon the ground; after having been watched in the night by their friends to keep the beasts from them, were at last suffered to be taken privately away, at the intercession of

the

the troops of Tigré, whose countrymen they were. Chremation and Abba Salama were abandoned to their fortune, and in part putrified; they were covered with heaps of stones thrown upon them by such as were passing, and had no other burial.

The next night, the 1st of January, 1771, according to order, I waited upon the king with Confu and Engedan, and with them Yafine: measures were taken for buying their horses and coats of mail; the Ras had advanced part of the money, the rest was to be made up by the meery, or king's duty, due by the Mahometan provinces, which had not been paid since he went to Tigré; a Mahometan servant of the king was sent for from the customhouse; with him was to go a man from Yafine, and with them I sent my letters by the hand of Soliman, a black of Ras el Feel, a man remarkable for his strength, courage, and size, and very shrewd and discerning, under the appearance of an idiot: Yafine was sent with them to get a safe conduct from his friend Fidele Shekh of Atbara, who was to convey them to Beyla, and thence to Sennaar.

It was not without great dispute and altercation the king would allow me the permission to send letters; at last, seeing he could do no better, it was agreed that, as an immediate engagement between Powuffen, Gusho, and Ras Michael, was inevitable, I should swear not to attempt to leave him till that affair was settled some way or

other ; but the king insisted I should also take an oath, that, should he be victorious over, or reconciled to the rebels, if the engagement I was under in my own country was not fulfilled, and I recovered my health, I should bring as many of my brethren and family as possible, with their horses, muskets, and bayonets ; that, if I could not pass by Sennaar, I should come by the way of the East Indies from Surat to Masuah, which, by how much it was more tedious, was by so much more secure, than that by Sennaar.

I cannot but hope, the impossibility of performing this oath extinguished the sin of breaking it ; at any rate it was personal, and the subsequent death of the king * must have freed me from it ; be that as it will, it had this good effect, that it greatly composed my mind for the time, as I now no longer considered myself as involved in that ancient and general rule of the country, Never to allow a stranger to return to his home. We that night learned, that the king had been in great straits ever since he came from Tigré ; that the Ras, who was possessed of all the revenues of the provinces that were in their allegiance, had never yet given the king an ounce of gold ; and that he furnished his daily subsistence from his own house, a cow for his own and great officers table,

* It was reported, when I was at Sennaar, that the king had been defeated and slain. I have no other authority, only think, all things considered, it was most probable.

and two loaves of bread for each of his servants ; as small an allowance as any private person gave. It was believed that the Ras had left most of his money in Tigré, and had trusted to the contributions he was to levy upon the great men whenever he should cross the Tacazzé ; but in this he disappointed himself by his cruelty, for no person came before him, on his arrival at Gondar, from whom he could raise a farthing.

It was about the 20th of January, that a message arrived from Powussen, to tell the Ras he had taken the usurper Socinios prisoner, and held him in irons at the king's disposal. He upbraided Michael with the cruelties of his executions, and declared his resolution of calling him to an account for these personally at Gondar ; he warned him in time, to repass the Tacazzé, and retire while it was in his power to his government of Tigré, where nobody would molest him, and leave the king at liberty to act for himself. Gusfo likewise sent a messenger, but what word he brought did not transpire ; after seeing the King and Ras Michael both these messengers proceeded to Fasil. Soon after this came a message from Fasil, desiring only that the King and the Ras might renew to him the grant of his father's lands and estates, which he formerly possessed : what was the meaning of this message I could never learn ; he was already in full possession of what he asked, and more ; no person had attempted to
take

take any thing from him, nor was it indeed in their power.

Proclamation was made accordingly in terms of the request, and all the lands that he had possessed were given him: before he could have news of this first grant, a second messenger came, desiring that he might be confirmed in his government of Maisha, Damot, and Agow. This too was immediately granted him, but a condition was added, that he should bring the troops of these provinces, and as many others as he could raise, to join the king with all possible speed, and take the field with Ras Michael against Powussen and Gulbo; and this was but what he had spontaneously promised when he made his peace at Dingleber. At the same time Ayto Aylo, brother to Engedan, was proclaimed governor of Begemder; and all people holding of the king or of Aylo's friends, (for he had a very large estate in that province) were ordered to join him; but a very few came, among whom was the famous Guigarr, chief of the clan, Waag of Lasta, son to Aylo's sister.

Mean time the king used all the means in his power to induce the Heghe to return to Koscam, for her presence in Gojam kept alive the spirit of a number of people that were attached to her, who bore very impatiently to see her banished, as she then was, though resident with her daughter Ozoro Welleta Israel, and surrounded by the forces of Aylo her grandson, who was governor of Gojam, and to whom half of that province belonged.

longed in property. But the queen was resolute never to trust Ras Michael, though it was believed she sent the king a sum in gold privately by Engedan.

It was in the end of January that another message arrived from Fasil, excusing his coming to Gondar on account of the badness of his health; he said, besides, he could not trust Michael unless he gave him Welleta Selassé, his grand-daughter, to wife, and sent her to him to Euré. I have already mentioned that the Ras was fond of this young lady himself, and nothing but that hindered him from giving her to the king in marriage; and it was said, and I believe with truth, that some delicacy * the king had expressed about this since his return from Tigré, was the reason of coldness between him and the Ras, and of Michael's putting the king on so short allowance on his first coming to Gondar: but all that was now removed by the necessities of the times; gold came from Tigré in plenty; even Rowassen had sent some of the revenue of Begemder, all the other provinces a proportion, with butter, cattle, and cotton cloths, for the maintenance of the King's household and troops: for my part, though I enjoyed the name of several posts, I had partaken since this revolution of a very small part of their revenues; I had been liberally supplied in the king's absence by Ozoro Esther and the queen.

* Suspicion of familiarity with the Ras her grandfather.

I had

I had few servants, and lived cheaply in the Iteghé's palace at Kolkam; but after my arrival, the king, on purpose I believe to disconcert my journey, ran me grievously into debt with the soldiers, and other expences that were, as I was told, absolutely necessary; it is true, these were paid in part at times, but very irregularly. Ras Michael was not a man to be solicited, nor was my temper such as could be brought to solicit him; from this it arose that often I had been in great straits, and obliged to live sparingly, which luckily was never a great hardship upon me, in order to fulfil my promise to others. And now the campaign was beginning, horses, and mules, and every thing necessary were to be purchased, and I was in debt above one hundred pounds, nor would it have been possible I ever should have cleared myself, for my daily expences were enormous, if it had not been for the situation that a certain Greek, named Petros, was in, from whom I borrowed about three hundred pounds, as I shall after mention. With regard to Kasmati Fasil, he sent me, twice, two large jars of honey from my lordship of Geesh, at two different times: the first was taken by Coque Abou Barea, the last tasted so bitter of lupines, that no use could be made of it. I was a Sovereign, it is true, and my revenue was what wise men have said is the best, — the love of the people. It went, however, but little way towards supporting my dignity.

While

While the king was at Kahha, keeping the festival of the Epiphany, he received a very extraordinary visit from Amha Yafous, son of the governor of Shoa, offering his personal service and assistance to the king, and brought with him, as a present, 500 ounces of gold, and a thousand excellent horsemen ready equipt at all points. Upon his being presented to the king, two young noblemen were instructed to be ready to lay hold of him by the arms, and prevent his throwing himself upon the ground if he intended so to do. The king was seated upon the throne, very richly dressed in a brocade, a very fine muslin web wrapt loosely about him, so as to hang in plaits, and in some parts show, and in some conceal, the flowers of the cloth of gold of which his waistcoat was composed. His hair was loose, combed out at its full length, and falling about his head in every direction, and a fork, like a skewer, made of a rhinoceros horn, with a gold button or head upon it, stuck through his hair near his temples; he was all perfumed with rose water, and two people stood on the opposite sides of the tent, each of them with a silver bottle full of it.

Amha Yafous with his thousand horse presented himself before the door of the tent, and rode on till he was compleatly in it; he then descended as in a great hurry or surprise, and ran forward, stooping to the feet of the throne, inclining his body lower and lower as he approached; and, just before the act of prostration, he was seized by

Tecla

Tecla Mariam and Guebra Menfus Kedus, and prevented from kissing the ground; the king held his hand uncovered, but not extended, that is, as if he did not intend or expect that he should kiss it. Amha Yafous, after the struggle was over about the prostration, suddenly seized the king's hand and kissed it, with some resistance on the part of the king, who, when he had kissed the back of his hand, turned the palm likewise, as a great familiarity and confidence in this country. There was a small stool, about half a foot from the ground, covered with a Persian carpet. Amha Yafous attempted to speak standing, but was not suffered, but constrained by the two noblemen to sit down on the little stool; they then deluged him so with rose-water, that I do believe he never in his life was so wet with rain. After some general questions the tent was cleared. All this ceremonial was premeditated and studied; the etiquette could not have been more punctually and uniformly observed in any court of Europe, and would have just signified what it did here.

Amha Yafous was a man from twenty-six to twenty-eight years of age, tall, and of a just degree of corpulence, with arms and legs finely made; he had a very beautiful face, small features, and the most affable manners. I have thought, when I have seen them together, that the king, Engedan, and himself, were three of the handsomest men I had ever beheld in any country; besides this, all three had fine understandings,
noble

noble sentiments, and courage superior to the greatest danger; charitable too; and humane inclinations, were it not for that accursed indifference, or rather propensity, one of them had to shed human blood; this the young king had imbibed in the school of Michael, but for natural talents he certainly was the first of the three. Apartments in the palace, and a table, were assigned to Amha Yafous, and he was served by the king's servants as well as his own; a guard was appointed at his door, the officer of which attended to receive his orders and take the word daily. This was the manner of receiving illustrious strangers in my time at Gondar. Anthulé, a Greek, master of the king's wardrobe, was ordered from time to time to bring him clothes of the same kind with those the king wore. All the Ozoros, or noble women at court, fell violently in love with Amha Yafous, as fame reported, except Ozoro Esther. The young prince had not a grain of coldness nor indifference in his nature; he carried himself, wherever he went with honourable, attentive, and decent gallantry. But his chief attention was paid to Welleta Selassé; nor was Ras Michael jealous, nor as public report went, was Welleta Selassé unkind; I was often in the evenings in his parties in her house; a fixed, never-changing melancholy hung upon her face; deep, and involuntary sighs escaped from her under visible constraint: it did not appear to me possible this could have been her behaviour,

haviour, if in actual enjoyment of successful love ; or that, after having gratified it, she could have put in execution that desperate resolution which apparently she had then formed in her mind.

Amha Yafous was son of a sister of Gusfo ; it was said afterwards that he had a commission from his father, governor of Shoa, to detach Gusfo, if possible, from his alliance with Powussen, and bring him back to his allegiance to the king. Whether this was true or not I cannot say, but that this, or something similar, was the case, seemed to be more than probable from the behaviour of Gusfo afterwards, during the whole campaign. Amha Yafous did not come to take part in the war, he only brought, in imitation of old times, a tribute to the king as a testimony of the loyalty of the faithful province of Shoa ; but he was so interested for the king, after being admitted into intimacy with him, and so pleased with the society of the young noblemen at court, that he determined to come back with the command of the troops of his father, and in his way force Gusfo to return to his duty, if he was not already determined.

He had heard, while at Shoa, from some priests of Debra Libanos, that there was a strange white man in favour with the king at Gondar, who could do every thing but raise the dead ; it was among his first requests to the king, to make him acquainted with me. The king therefore ordered me to wait upon him every morning, and I, on

my

my part, did not let slip that opportunity. Insensibly we came to be inseparable companions. Our conversation fell one day upon the Abyssinian kings who first lived at Shoa at the time when the kingdom of Adel was a great mart for the East Indian trade, before the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope. He said that a book containing their history, he believed, was in some of the churches in Shoa, and that he would immediately send for it. Although I could not help testifying my desire of having a book which I had sought for in vain through the rest of the provinces of Abyssinia, yet I thought it unreasonable to desire a man to send 300 miles merely for the purpose of getting it; I therefore did not press it, being satisfied with his promise; but as my work would have been incomplete without it, I asked my friend Tecla Mariam to mention it to him, as from the king. His answer was, "I have already promised to get it for Yagoube, the messenger by this time is in Amhara; depend upon it, my father will not fail to let me have it; for fear of his mistake, I have dispatched a very intelligent man, who knows and has seen the book at Debra Libanos." The promise was punctually kept, the book came, and from it I have drawn the history of the Adelan war, and the reign of those kings who had not yet returned to Axum, but reigned in Shoa.

One evening I inquired of him concerning the story which the Portuguese heard, at the disco-

very

very of Benin, that the blacks of that country had intercourse with a Christian island state they acknowledged as sovereign, from which they procured the investiture of their lands, as has been already mentioned in the beginning of this work: whether any such commerce did exist with Shoa at present, or if traces remained of it in older times? if there was any other Christian or Jewish state in his neighbourhood to which this description could apply? He said they knew nothing of Benin at Shoa, nor had he ever heard of the name; nor any custom of the kind that I had mentioned, which either then did, or ever had prevailed in Shoa: he knew of no other Christian state farther to the southward, excepting Naredi, a great part of which was conquered by the Galla, who were Pagans. The blacks that were next to Shoa, he said, were exceedingly fierce, warlike, and cruel; worse than the Galla, and of the same kind with the Shangalla in Abyssinia. The other nations were partly Mahometan, but chiefly Galla, and some of these had turned Mahometan; but that they had no knowledge of any commerce with the Western, or Atlantic Ocean, though they knew the Eastern or Indian Ocean, which was nearest; were often served with Indian goods from Mahometan merchants from thence; but that the Galla had over-run most of the intermediate countries, and made the ways dangerous.

* Conquetes des Portugais, liv. 1. p. 46. Lafitan.

After

After Amba Yafous's audience with the king, he waited on Ras Michael also, to whom he brought a present in gold; politely excusing himself for having brought it in that form, on account that any other would have been troublesome, from the length of the way. He well knew, however, that an apology was needless, and that Ras Michael never saw any present in a more agreeable form than that of gold. I was not at the audience, nor do I know what passed at it, only that, on his introduction, the Ras was held up on his feet, and received him standing; they then both sat down upon the same seat, after which they dined heartily together at Ozoro Esther's apartment, who came from Koftam on purpose to prepare for their entertainment, and they drank and conversed together till late at night.

The sight of gold, and a thousand horse at the juncture, made Ras Michael as light and cheerful as a young man of twenty-five. No words concerning the government of Shoa passed, nor any proclamation relative to the state of that province; and this silence was equal to declare it independent, as it was intended, and indeed it had been considered as such a long time before. As I saw Amba Yafous eat raw beef like the Abyssinians, I asked him if it was the custom of other nations to the southward? He said he believed so, if they were not Mahometans; and inquired of me if it

it was not likewise the practice among us. I imagine it prevails as far as the Cape of Good Hope.

Another interview, which happened at Kahha, was much more extraordinary in itself, though of much less importance to the state. Guangoul, chief of the Galla of Angot, that is, of the eastern Galla, came to pay his respects to the king and Ras Michael; he had with him about 500 foot and 40 horse: he brought with him a number of large horns for carrying the king's wine, and some other such trifles. He was a little, thin, cross-made man, of no apparent strength or swiftness, as far as could be conjectured; his legs and thighs being thin and small for his body, and his head large; he was of a yellow, unwholesome colour, not black nor brown; he had long hair plaited and interwoven with the bowels of oxen, and so knotted and twisted together as to render it impossible to distinguish the hair from the bowels, which hung down in long strings, part before his breast and part behind his shoulder, the most extraordinary ringlets I had ever seen. He had likewise a wreath of guts hung about his neck, and several rounds of the same about his middle, which served as a girdle, below which was short cotton cloth dipt in butter, and all his body was wet, and running down the same; he seemed to be about fifty years of age, with a confident and insolent superiority painted in his face. In his country it seems, when he appears in state, the beast he rides upon is a cow. He was then in full

full dress and ceremony, and mounted upon one, not of the largest sort, but which had monstrous horns. He had no saddle on his cow. He had short drawers, that did not reach the middle of his thighs; his knees, feet, legs, and all his body were bare. He had a shield of a single hide, warped by the heat in several directions, and much in the shape of a high-crowned, large, straw-hat, with which the fashionable women in our own country sometimes disguise themselves. He carried a short lance in his right hand, with an ill-made iron head, and a shaft that seemed to be of a thorn-tree, but altogether without ornament, which is seldom the case with the arms of barbarians. Whether it was necessary for the poizing himself upon the sharp ridge of the beast's back, or whether it was meant as graceful riding, I do not know, being quite unskilled in cowmanship; but he leaned exceedingly backwards, pushing his belly forwards, and holding his left arm and shield stretched out on one side of him, and his right arm and lance in the same way on the other, like wings.

The king was seated on his ivory chair, to receive him, almost in the middle of his tent; the day was very hot, an insufferable stench of carrion soon made every one in the tent sensible of the approach of this nasty sovereign, even before they saw him. The king, when he perceived him coming, was so struck with the whole figure and appearance, that he could not contain himself from an

immoderate fit of laughter, which finding it impossible to stifle, he rose from his chair, and ran as hard as he could into another apartment behind the throne.

The savage got off from his cow at the door of the tent with all his tripe about him; and, while we were admiring him as a monster, seeing the king's seat empty, he took it for his own, and down he sat upon the crimson silk cushion, with the butter running from every part of him. A general cry of astonishment was made by every person in the tent; he started up I believe without divining the cause, and before he had time to recollect himself, they fell all upon him, and with pushes and blows drove this greasy chieftain to the door of the tent, staring with wild amazement, not knowing what was next to happen. It is high treason, and punishable by immediate death, to sit down upon the king's chair. Poor Guangoul owed his life to his ignorance. The king had beheld the whole scene through the curtain; if he laughed heartily at the beginning, he laughed ten times more at the catastrophe; he came out laughing, and unable to speak. The cushion was lifted and thrown away, and a yellow Indian shawl spread on the ivory stool; and ever after, when it was placed, and the king not there, the stool was turned on its face upon the carpet to prevent such like accidents.

Guangoul, disappointed of having an audience of the king, went to the Ras, where he was better received,

received, but what passed I know not. His troops, armed like himself, with shields of no resistance, and hedge-stakes sharpened at the end instead of lances, were no acquisition to any party, especially in the present quarrel, where all the veteran troops in Abyssinia were nearly equally divided on opposite sides; besides, the Shoa horse had taken the eyes of people so much, that they began to think little of any cavalry that was not in some degree equipped like them.

After the king returned to the palace, great diversion was made at Guangoul's appearance, in so much that Ozoro Esther, who hated the very name of Galla, and of this race in particular, insisted upon seeing a representation of it. Doho, accordingly, a dwarf, belonging to Ras Michael, very ugly, with a monstrous big head, but very sharp and clever, and capable of acting his part, was brought to represent the person of Guangoul: a burnt stick and a bad shield were provided; but the great difficulty remained, how to persuade Doho the dwarf to put on the raw guts about his neck and waist, and, above all, to plait them in the hair, which he absolutely refused, both from religious and cleanly motives; as for the butter it was no objection, as all the Abyssinians anoint themselves with it daily, after bathing. Here we were very near at a stand, all the ladies having in vain supplicated him to suffer for their sakes a temporary pollution, with promises that oceans of rose and scented water should be poured upon him

afterwards, to restore his former sweetness. Doho was a man who constantly spent his time in reading scripture, the acts of the councils, the works of St. John Chrysostom, and other such books as they have among them. He remained inflexible: at last I suggested that several hanks of cotton, dyed blue, red, and yellow, should be got from the weavers in the Mahometan town, and these oiled, greased, and knotted properly, and twisted among the hair, well-anointed with butter, would give a pretty accurate resemblance of what we saw in the king's tent. All hands were immediately set to work; the cotton was provided; Ozoro Esther's servants and slaves decked Doho to the life. I spotted his face with stibium, and others anointed him with butter: an old milk-cow was found, contrary to my expectation, that suffered a rider without much impatience, and in came Guangoul into a great hall in Ozoro Esther's apartment.

Never was any thing better personated or better received; the whole hall resounded with one cry of laughter; Doho, encouraged by this and the perfect indifference and steadiness of his cow, began to act his part with great humour and confidence: he was born in the neighbourhood of these very Galla, knew their manners, and spoke their language perfectly. Amha Yafous, Confu, Aylo brother to Engedan, some servants of the king, acted the part that we did in the tent the day of the audience, that is, stood on each side of the
king's

king's chair: the cow was brought into the middle of the room, and Guangoul descended with his lance and shield in great state; a cushion was not spared, nor did Doho spare the cushion; the butter shewed very distinctly where he had been sitting: we all fell upon him and belaboured him heartily, and chased him to the door. His speedy retreat was not counterfeited. Ozoro Altash, Esther's sister, and a number of the ladies of the court, were present. Ozoro Esther declared she would send for the Ras, he had been in great good humour since the arrival of Amha Yafous. I had not seen him since the recovery of his son, and happened to be at the door next him; he took me by the hand, and said, "Welleta Hawaryat (that is the name of his son) is well, you are very kind."

Michael was esteemed the best orator in his country, and spoke his own language, Tigran, with the utmost purity and elegance; yet in common conversation he was very sententious, two or three words at a time, but never obscure; this he had contracted by a long practice of commanding armies, where he saw as instantly and clearly, as he spoke shortly and distinctly. He bowed very civilly to the ladies, and pointed to me to sit down on the seat by him. Amha Yafous was standing before him, I hastened to sit down on the carpet at his feet, and he seemed to recollect himself and placed Amha Yafous beside him: it was easy to see his mind was otherwise occupied, and

and as easy to perceive by his look, that he gave me credit for my behaviour. When they were all seated, “ Well, says he, in great good humour, what now, what is the matter? what can I do for you, Yagoube? are the women in your country as idle and foolish as these? has Ozoro Esther chosen a wife for you? she shall give you your dinner: I will give her a portion; and as you are a horseman, the king with Amha Yafous’s leave, said he bowing, shall give you the command of the Shoa horse; I have seen them; the men I think are almost as white as yourself.” Amha Yafous bowed in return, and said, “ Sir, if the king bestows them so worthily, I promise to bring another thousand as good as these to join them after the rains, before next Epiphany.”—“ And I, says Ozoro Esther, for my part, I have long had a wife for him, but this is not the present business, we know your time is precious, Guangoul is without, and desires an audience of you.”—Poh! says the Ras, Guangoul is gone to Gusho, at Minziro, and there is like to be a pretty story: here are accounts come from Tigre, that he has committed great barbarities in his journey, laid waste some villages, killed the people, for not furnishing him with provisions: here in Belessen he also burnt a church and a village belonging to the Iteghé, and killed many poor people; I do not know what he means; I hope they will keep him where he is, and not send him home again through Tigre.

A communication of this kind, very uncommon from the Ras, occasioned a serious appearance in the whole company; but he had no sooner done with speaking, than in comes Doho, upon his cow: neither man nor woman that had yet seen him, ever laughed so heartily as the old Ras? he humoured the thing entirely; welcomed Doho in Galla language, and saw the whole farce, finished by his flight to the door, with the utmost good humour. Then taking Amha Yafous with him, and several great officers who had come in the interim, he returned by a private passage to his own apartments.

As I shall have no occasion for further mention of this chieftain, I will here finish his story, though not in the order of time. Gulho and Powuffen had gained Guangoul, and persuaded him to make an irruption with his Galla into the province of Tigré, to create a diversion against Michael, and, for that purpose, they had sent him home nearly the way he had come through that province. From this encouragement he had begun to conduct himself still worse than formerly. Ras Michael, suspecting what would happen, privately dispatched Ayto Confu after him with 600 horse. That young soldier, slappy in a command that highly gratified his mother, and guided by the cries of the people, followed with the utmost diligence, and came up with him in the neighbourhood of Lasta, and there, after little resistance, Guangoul and his troops were cut to pieces, those
that

that had escaped being all slain by the exasperated peasants. Confu returned to Gondar the night of the fifth day, together with the bloody trophies of his conquest over Guangoul and his Galla.

I have before mentioned that this chief had brought with him a quantity of large horns for the king's service. Some of this sort having been seen in India filled with civet, have given occasion to those travellers who saw them there to say, that the animal producing these large horns was a carnivorous bull of a prodigious size, inhabiting the interior parts of Africa. That no illustration of this kind may be wanting, a copperplate of this curious bull is, I think, in some of the first volumes of the Philosophical Transactions. The origin of the tale is believed to be in Bernier or Thevenot. It may, however, with great certainty, be relied upon, that no such animal exists in Africa, nor probably in the whole creation. The animal furnishing those monstrous horns is a cow or bull, which would be reckoned of a middling size in England; its head and neck are larger and thicker in proportion, but not very remarkably so. I have been told this animal was first brought by the Galla from near the Line, where it rains continually, and the sun is little seen. This extraordinary size of its horns proceeds from a disease that the cattle have in those countries, of which they die, and is probably derived from their pasture and climate.

Whenever

Whenever the animal shews symptoms of this disorder, he is set apart in the very best and quietest grazing-place, and never driven nor molested from that moment. His value lies then in his horns, for his body becomes emaciated and lank in proportion as the horns grow large. At the last period of his life the weight of his head is so great that he is unable to lift it up, or at least for any space of time. The joints of his neck become callous at last, so that it is not any longer in his power to lift his head. In this situation he dies, with scarcely flesh covering his bones, and it is then the horns are of the greatest size and value. I have seen horns that would contain as much as a common-sized iron-hooped water-pail, such as they make use of in the houses in England; but the Galla, who have a ready market for these of all sizes, generally kill the beast when his horns will contain something less than six gallons. Two of these horns, filled with wine or spirits, are carried very commodiously upon a woman's back, slung over her shoulders. I had two of the largest size stole from me that night Socinios, Confu, and Chremation plundered my house, nor could I ever recover them. I have seen them at Gondar sold for four ounces of gold, equal to ten pounds sterling, the pair.

On the 17th of February came messengers from Fasil, with the old language of proposals of submission and peace, and a repetition of his demand, that Welleta Selassé should be given him for a wife,

wife, and sent to him, at least as far as Dingleber, where he would advance to meet her ; excusing himself from coming to Gondar, because the Ras had already broken his promise to him ; for the condition of peace made with the Ras, when he was besieging the mountain, was, That if Michael should bring the king to the Tacazzé, and surrender him there, and then return and content himself with the government of Tigré, without proceeding to Gondar, that Fasil should receive the king and conduct him to the capital, and be created Ras and governor in place of Michael. Fasil had punctually performed his part, and of this Michael had taken advantage, and had violated every article which he had stipulated on the other side ; and this was at least the alledged reason why Fasil had refused to come to Gondar. The same evening arrived also messengers from Gulho and Powussen, declaring to Ras Michael, that, if he did not leave Gondar and return to Tigré, they would come and burn the town. They professed great duty to the king, but charged the Ras with every sort of enormity, and upon his refusal sent him a defiance.

The same evening came an express from Shoa, which most punctually brought the book I so much wished for, containing the lives of the first kings that lived at Shoa; a fair and fine copy, wrote upon parchment in a large quarto size, in the pure ancient language of Geez. The author was nearly contemporary with the annals which
he

he writes. I shewed it to the king, who till then had never seen it, and who only said, I fear, Yagoube, you are carrying home these books only to make your kings laugh at ours. The satisfaction I received upon the acquisition of this book was greatly diminished by the loss of the donor, Amha Yafous, who set out the 20th of February, attended with about a hundred men, his own servants, and followed by the regret and the good wishes of all that had known him, mine in particular, having been, from the first time I saw him, very much attached to him.

Before his departure he had two long conferences with the king upon the contents of the dispatches sent by his father from Shoa. The substance he frankly told me was, that he did not intend to meddle with the quarrels of Ras Michael, nor those of Fasil; that they should settle these in their own way; but if either attempted any thing against the king, set up any usurpers, as they had done in the person of Socinios, and continued so far against their allegiance to Tecla Haimanout as to withhold his whole revenue, and not to pay him wherewithal to support his state, that he would consider himself as protector of the royal family of Solomon, as the governors of Shoa had always been. It was believed generally, by Amha Yafous coming in person, that a treaty between some great men in both sides, begun at his instance, would bring every man that could mount a horse

a horse from as far south as Gingiro, to overrun both the provinces of Begemder and Amhara, and either displace the two governors, or at least force them to their duty; and it was owing to this, in all probability, that Gusho acted with such moderation as he did in the campaign that soon followed.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXIV.

Rebel Army approaches Gondar—King marches out of Gondar—Takes Post at Serbraxos—The Author returns to Gondar with Confu wounded.

GENTLE showers of rain began now to fall, and to announce the approach of winter; nay, some unusually severe and copious had already fallen. Gusfo and Powuffen of Amhara and Begemder, Kasmati Ayabdar governor of Foggora, Aylo son of Ozoro Welleta Israel the queen's daughter, governor of Gojam, Woodage Asahel, with the troops of Maitsha, and Coque Abou Barea from Kuara, were at the head of all the forces they could raise about Emfras and Nabca, and the borders of the lake Tzana. A brother-in-law of Powuffen had brought a considerable body of troops from Zaat and Dehannah, two clans of Lasta, enemies to Guigarr, who had declared for Michael; and these were the best horse in the rebel army, superior to any in Begemder.

This

This numerous army of Confederates were all ready, expecting the rain would make the Tacazzé impassable, and cut off Michael's retreat to Tigrè. Fasil alone kept them in suspense, who, with about 12,000 men, remained at Ibaba, professing to be at peace with Michael, in the mean time keeping all Maitsha quiet, and waiting for the coming of Welleta Yafous, and 20,000 Galla, whom he had sent for from the other side of the Nile, intending, as he said, to march on the arrival of this reinforcement, and join the king at Gondar. Although it may well be doubted if ever he intended all or any part of this, one thing was very certain, that he was sincere in his hatred to Gusho and Powussen; he never could forget their treachery in breaking their appointment and promise at Court-Ohha, and expose him either to fight Michael singly, or have his whole country burnt and destroyed. Although Michael had, for these last months, done every thing in his power to bring back to the king such people of consideration that possessed the lands and estates about Gondar, and were the most respectable of their nobility for influence and riches, bred up about court, and who did chiefly constitute it; yet the cruelty of his executions, his insatiable greed of money and power, and the extreme facility with which he broke his most sacred engagements, had terrified them from putting themselves into his hand; though they did not raise men, or join any side, but lived privately at a distance, yet their absence

absence from about the king had the worst effect upon his affairs. A great desertion had likewise happened since his coming among his old troops of Tigré, both of officers and soldiers. The execution of Guebra Denghel, and other two noblemen, had greatly alienated the minds of many of their countrymen and their connections; but, above all, his breach of promise made before the mountain of Haramat, that he was to levy no taxes upon that province for seven years, (but which he was now doing with the greatest rigour before one had expired) discontented them all.

The return of Wellela Michael and Kefla Yafous from Samen, with about 6000 men, had considerably strengthened his army; added to this, 2000 more, who came voluntarily, from their love to Kefla Yafous, from Temben, where he was governor; these were picked men, partly musqueteers; there was nothing equal to them in the army.

Gusho was advanced to Minziro. Powuffen had his head-quarters at Korreva, not above sixteen miles from Gondar. The whole plain to the lake was covered with troops. The weather was unseasonably cold, and considerable quantities of rain had fallen from the 23d of February to the 29th of March. The rebels had begun to lay waste Dembea, and burnt all the villages in the plain from south to west, making it like a desert between Michael and Fasil, as far as they dared venture to advance towards either. This they
did

did to exasperate Michael, and draw him out from Gondar; for they had most of them great property in the town, and did not wish to be obliged to fight him there. He bore this fight very impatiently, as well as the constant complaints of people flying into the town from the depredations of the enemy, and stripped of every thing.

The king often ascended to the top of the tower of his palace, the only one to which there remains a stair, and there contemplated, with the greatest displeasure, the burning of his rich villages in Dembea. One day while he was here he shewed an instance of that quick penetration for which he was remarkable, and which, as a proof of this, I shall here mention.

There is a large waste space on each side of the palace where the market is kept. It had rained, and it was in the evening almost destitute of people; there were only two men at a considerable distance, who seemed to be in close conversation together, one of them apparently very much the worse of liquor, the other had hold of the end of the sash, or girdle, which was round the body of the drunken man; it is a narrow web of cotton cloth, which they wind eight or ten times about their waist. The king said to me, Do you know, Yagoube, what these two men are about? I answered, No. I saw the drunkard untwine one turn of his sash, which the other was feeling and looking curiously at, as if examining and doubting its goodness. That man, says the king, is robbing
the

the drunkard of his sash : go down two or three of you who run best, and apprehend him, but hide yourselves till he has committed the theft, and seize him as he passes. The orders were quickly obeyed ; the drunkard unwound his sash, by turning himself round and round, while the other seemed to be measuring it by the length of his arm, from his elbow to his forefinger, and then gathering it up. This was done very deliberately till it was all unwound, and the far end loose ; upon which the fellow, who was measuring, gathering it in his arms, ran off as fast as he could, leaving the drunkard standing motionless, apparently in great surprise and amazement. The thief was immediately seized and brought up to the king, who ordered him to be thrown over the tower. At my intercession, and that of those about him, he was pardoned, and the drunkard's sash was returned to him.

Ever since the middle of February, Ras Michael had resolved to march out, and give battle to the rebels encamped about Korreva, committing every sort of violence, and burning all the villages, houses, and barns in Dembea, with the corn they contained more than what served for their present use ; but the great superiority of the enemy in horse had always made him delay his intention.

Yasine, had, indeed, succeeded in his commission to Sennaar, as far as it regarded the horses. He had found the Arabs encamped immediately upon the frontier at Ras el Feel, and had received

from them very near 200 of one kind or other, of which 76 only answered the purpose of mounting the king's black servants; the others were distributed among the rest of the army that wanted them. But they had not been equally successful in purchasing their coats of mail, fourteen only of which had been brought with the horses. In order to buy the rest, the messenger continued his journey to Sennaar, and with him my servant Soliman with my letters, to which, of consequence, I had as yet no return. But what appeared at that time most material to me, Fidele Shekh of Atbara wrote to Yafine, "That, there was no fear but that I should be well received at Sennaar, where Nasser, a young king, had succeeded his father, whom he had deposed; but that the great difficulty was to pass between Ras el Feel and Teawa, the place of his residence, and from thence to the banks of the river Dender, for that the Ganjar horse of Kuara, and the Arabs their friends, were at war with the Arabs of Atbara, and had burnt all their crops and villages: that he sometimes did not think himself safe in Teawa, and that a load of salt had not been suffered to pass for several months; which, indeed, was the reason why the Arabs of Atbara were come so near Ras el Feel, and that the king's horse were procured so readily at the first coming." This traitor, however, added, "That if, by any means, I could advance to him at Teawa, I need not take any thought about the rest of the journey; and

and that it was better I should come quietly and quickly, without writing to Sennaar before-hand : and he concluded with great professions of respect and friendship for me."

It had been very cold, and more than usual rainy, since the beginning of February; the 9th was a day of close rain; and this, being earlier than common, very much discouraged the soldiers who were naked, and, therefore, very sensible of cold, or rain, and, as I have before said, never can be brought to engage willingly, unless under the influence of a warm sun.

At last the cries of the people flying into Gondar, seeking protection from the cruelties of the rebels, determined the Ras to march out, and let his all upon the fortune of a battle. The risk was not thought great, as he had been all his life in use to conquer; had a better army at that time than ever he commanded; the Begemder troops, too, in whom the rebels trusted most, were but those which he and his men had beaten at Nefas Mufa, although led by a very brave and valiant officer, Mariam Barea. All this was true; but then, since that period, these troops of Begemder had been constantly led by himself, had been trained, and disciplined with the old troops of Tigre, and taught to conquer with them. Above all, they had been used to see the effect of fire-arms, which they no longer feared as formerly; but boldly rushed in upon the musqueteers, some-

times without giving them time to fire, or at least before they had time to charge again.

At last, having previously called in all his outposts, on the 13th of May he marched out of Gondar, taking with him the King and Abuna, as also Ozoro Esther, and Ozoro Altash her sister, and all the other ladies about court, who were in possession of the great fiefs of the crown, and whom he obliged to personal attendance, as well as to bring the quota of troops they were bound to by their respective tenures.

The king's army halted upon the same ground they had done on their return to Gondar. They were then supposed to be near 20,000 foot, belonging to Tigre and its dependencies, incomparably the best troops of the empire, 6000 of which were armed with musquets, six times the number that all the rest of Abyssinia could furnish, and, considering they were all match-locks, very expert in the management of them. The rest of the foot which joined them since he passed the Tacazzé were about 10,000 besides 2000 of the king's household, 500 of which were horsemen; of these, few short of 200 were his black servants, armed with coats of mail, the horses with plates of brass on their cheeks and faces, with a sharp iron spike of about five inches in length, which stuck out in the middle of their forehead, a very troublesome, useless piece of their armour; their bridles were iron chains; the body of the horse covered with a kind of thin quilt stuffed with cotton,

ton, with two openings made above the flaps of the saddle, into which the horseman put his thighs and legs, and which covered him from his hip (where his shirt of mail ended) down to a little above his ankle: his feet were covered with slippers of thin leather, without heels, and his stirrups were of the Turkish or Moorish form, into which his whole foot entered, and, being hung very short, he could raise himself, and stand as firmly as if he was upon plain ground. The saddles were in the Moorish form likewise, high before and behind; a strong lace made fast to the coat of mail by the one end, the other passed through a small hole in the back of the saddle, kept it close down, so that the back was never exposed by the coat of mail rising over the hinder part of the saddle. Each had a small ax in the surcingle of his saddle, and a pike about fourteen feet long, the weapon with which he charged; it was made of very light wood, brought from the banks of the Nile, with a small four-edged head, and the butt end balanced by a long spike of iron; this entered a leather case fastened by a thong to the saddle, and was rested sometimes below the thigh, and sometimes above, and guided by the right hand at the height the point was intended to strike at. The horseman's head was covered with a helmet of copper, or block tin, much like those of our light horse, with large crests of black horse tail.

The

The officers were distinguished from the soldiers by locks of hair dyed yellow, interspersed with the black. Upon the front of each helmet was a silver star, at least a white-metal one, and before the face, down to the top of the nose, a flap of iron chain, made in the same manner as the coat of mail, but only lighter, which served as a vizier. This was the most troublesome part of the whole, it was hot and heavy, and constantly fretted the cheek and nose, when either the man or the horse were in motion; and therefore I always substituted a black silk net, which concealed my colour better, and for the rest of my face I committed it to the care of Providence.

This body of horse was able to make their way through all the cavalry in Abyssinia, if they had been drawn up against them with equal fronts; for every horseman sat immoveable upon his saddle, and acted most powerfully by his weight alone, and was perfectly master of his person also by the breadth and shortness of his stirrups; whereas the Abyssinian horsemen were placed most disadvantageously, their head and body naked, their saddle small, and of no support to them, their stirrup-leathers long, and no stirrups to put their foot in; but being constantly afraid of their horse falling upon them, the only hold which they had was the outside of an iron ring, which they grasped between their great and second toe, so that they had no strength from their stirrups,

rupts, whilst their foot was always swelled, and their toes sore and galled.

Of the thousand Shoa horse about 60 had deserted; the rest were all in good order, each armed with their lances about ten feet long, and two light javelins, their shafts being of cane, which they threw at a great distance; the lance they never loosed out of their hand; as for their stirrups and saddle, they were of the same bad construction as those of the Abyssinians in general, and this reduced them nearly to a footing with them.

The horsemen of the king's army were about 7000, mostly very indifferent troops; so that his whole muster was nearly 7000 musqueteers, 25,000 foot, armed with lances and shields, and about 7500 horsemen; in round numbers about 40,000 men. It is not possible, I believe, to know, with greater precision, the number, such is the confusion of barbarous armies on these occasions, and such the inclination of their leaders to magnify and increase their quotas. Besides these, Ayto Confu and Sanuda were left with about 600 men each, to protect Gondar from flying, pillaging parties, and to keep the communication open between the army and the capital, from whence the provisions were to be supplied.

This army was furnished with a number of excellent officers, veterans of noble families, who had spent their whole life in war, which we may say, for these last 400 years, has never ceased to lay

lay desolate this unhappy country; the principal were Ras Michael, who, arrived at the age of seventy-four, had passed the last 50 years of his life in a course of continued victories, Attham Georgis, and Guebra Christos, uncles by the mother's side to the king; Kessa Yalous, in the full vigour of life, who, though unhappily born in a country plunged in ignorance, and where there is no education, possessed every quality that became a man, whether a soldier, statesman, citizen, or friend; Welleta Michael, master of the household to the king; Billetana Gueta Tecla; Basia Hezekias, and Guebra Mascal, two principal officers of his musquetry, and a great number of others of equal merit, known better in the camp than at the court; Aylo, and Engedan, two sons of Kasmari Elhte; Ayto Confu, son of Ozoro Esther, all young men, employed generally in enterprises, and growing every day more and more into reputation.

It is impossible so much as to guess at the number of the enemy, they were always very numerous, but constantly changing. It was said, that Begonder and Lasta had at one time 30,000 horsemen; I should believe this number greatly exaggerated, from what I heard afterwards; and that the whole cavalry in their army did not exceed what it was at the battle of Serbrakob. I suppose indeed, that, together with their foot, they did not much exceed that number, though they were at times magnified to 50 and 60,000, most of them

very

very bad troops, continually deserting, excepting about 4000 men belonging to Gusho, from Amhara, who likewise brought about 100 matchlocks, and besides these there were scarcely any in the rebel army. I must not, however, forget 200 horsemen, Edjow Galla, servants and relations of the late king Joas, who behaved in the most gallant and undaunted manner, and upon all occasions set a noble example to the rest of the army.

Ras Michael himself led the van; the king the center, with Gutbra Mascal, and a considerable body of musqueteers of Tigré; he had no horse but those of his own household. The rear was commanded by Welleta Michael, and Tecla: how disposed, or of what troops constituted I know not, for the front, center, and rear were understood to march in order, but it was often impossible to discern any such divisions; we were often all in confusion, sometimes we were in the middle of the front, sometimes joined and mixed with the rear; all our officers had lost their command, and were crowding about Ras Michael and the king; women bearing provisions, horns of liquor, and mills for grinding corn, upon their backs; idle women of all sorts, half dead with fear, crying and roaring, mounted upon mules; and men driving mules loaded with baggage, mingled with the troops, and passing through in all directions, presented such a tumultuous appearance that it surpassed all description. There were above 10,000 women

women accompanying the army: the Ras had about 50 loaded with bouza, and the king I suppose near as many.

The fight threw me for a moment into low spirits. I know not if the king saw it. I was perfectly silent, when he cried, Well, what do you say to us now, Yagoube? I answered, Is this the order in which your majesty means to engage? He laughed, and said, Aye; why not, you will see. If that is so, I replied, I only hope it is the enemy's custom as well as your majesty's to be in no better order. The king was going to answer me, when Guebra Mascal, who was just beside him, cried out, This is a business you know nothing about, Yagoube; go to your Felac (quadrant) and your fortune-telling, if you are afraid; we have no need of you, nor your advice to-day. Respect for the presence of the king, which you seem to be void of, said I, hinders me from answering you as I otherwise would have done; but be assured, in which ever army they were to-day, they are not men like Guebra Mascal whom I should be afraid of. The king looked at him much displeased, and, I believe, said something favourable of me; what it was I did not distinctly hear.

It was now about 10 o'clock, when, marching close along the foot of the hills, we arrived at Tedda. The burying-place of Hatzé Hannes I. son of Facilidas, and father of Yafous the Great, was scarce a quarter of a mile to the S. W. of us,

us, and the church of St. George a little more on the east, when orders came from the Ras for us to encamp on the side of the hill, which we accordingly did, and were presently in better order than we were when marching. The Ras, who had passed the river of Tedda, encamped on the south side of it. It happened that our two bodies, the front and center, were at that time treading upon one another's heels; but the rear, from some accident, was considerably behind, and part of it had scarce passed the Mogetch.

Both the burying-place, and church near it, were planted thick round with cypress and cedar trees. Just a little before the Ras ordered us to encamp, a messenger arrived from Netcho, (the Fit-Auraris) that he had that morning met the Fit-Auraris of Begemder on this side of the river Mariam; that he had killed the Fit-Auraris himself, (a man of Lasta) with 37 of his men, and driven them back: he added, that he intended to fall back himself upon the Ras's army, unless stopt by contrary orders; these the Ras did not send, being desirous that he should join him, as he soon after did, without being pursued: he brought word that the army of the rebels was near at hand, between Korreva and the lake; that Powussen's head-quarters were at Korreva, and that he had heard Gusho had pushed on advanced posts, as far as the church of Mariam; but this he did not know for certain, being only the information of a dying man. Ras Michael immediately detached Guebra Mafcal, and another officer, with 400 men

men to take possession of the sepulchre and the church at Tedda, and conceal themselves among the cedar-trees.

We had not encamped long, before the rear came in sight. Confu, son of Ozoro Esther, whom the Ras had left to guard Gondar, hearing how near the enemy was, and the probability of a battle that day, had left his post, and joined Yafine, with the horse of Ras el Feel, that were in the rear; soon after this junction, Asahel Woodage, with about 400 men, partly Edjow Galla, (the late king Joas's household) partly Maitsba, came up from the Dembea side of the lake Tzana, and began to harrafs the rear, marching in great confusion. Confu, though something superior in number, was thought to be inferior in the goodness of troops by much more than the difference; but the event proved the contrary, for he charged Woodage Asahel so forcibly, that he obliged him to quit our rear, and retire across the plain at a pace, which if not a flight, did very much resemble it. Ayto Confu pressed vigorously upon him, till, being now clear of the rest of the army, and in the fair open plain, Woodage wheeled shortly about, and shewed by his countenance that it was not to avoid Ayto Confu, but Ras Michael's musquetry, that he retreated to a greater distance; both sides stopt to breathe their horses for some minutes; but it was plain afterwards, Asahel Woodage, an old soldier, trusted much to the known valour of his troops, and wished

wished to strike a blow of consequence in presence of his old enemy the Ras.

Ras Michael was at the door of his tent then playing at dams, or drafts, as was his custom, and Ozoro Efther was trembling to see her son on the point of being surrounded by merciless Galla, the nation who most of all she detested, and who had every cause to hate her. All the young men, (Confu's friends) with their lances in their hands, and ready to mount on horseback, beseeched the Ras to allow them to go down into the plain to the assistance of Confu; but the old general, without leaving off his game, said, "I do strictly forbid one of you to stir; Confu has broke my orders to-day, and brought himself into a scrape by his own folly; let me see him get out of it by his courage and conduct, and thereby set the army a better example than he has yet done."—"Sir, said I, at least station some musquetry on the small hill, at the edge of the plain, that, if Confu is beaten, I may not have the mortification of seeing Yafine, and the new troops of Ras el Feel, (who were in their proper post) massacred before my eyes by these cowardly barbarians, and lose all my baggage and provisions." I spoke this in the utmost anguish, when the Ras lifted up his head with a ghastly kind of laugh, and said, "Right, well do so, Yagoube." Though this was but an imperfect permission, I ran down to the station with such haste that I fell twice in my way, and was considerably

considerably hurt, for the ground was rocky, and the grass slippery.

Although I had only waved my cloak, and cried come on, first, a large number of matchlocks of Ozoro Esther's, and the king's, hastened immediately to the ground. Confu by this time had charged, and after a stout resistance beat Woodage back into the plain; Woodage, however, again faced about, and after some resistance, Confu in his turn was driven back in evident disorder, and pushed almost in under the post, where our soldiers had made ready their muskets, to fire if they came a step nearer. At this instant a body of about 30 or 40 horse (the commander we afterwards knew to be Ayto Engedan) came up full gallop from the right, and stopt the Galla in their pursuit. Confu's men rallied upon this assistance, and Asahel Woodage retired in a direction passing close under the sepulchre, Engedan and Confu keeping at a moderate pace on his left between them and the army, and forcing them down, as it were, to the trap they knew was laid for them. They were yet a long shot from the cedars that surrounded the sepulchre, when a volley was discharged at them from among the trees, where Michael had posted his 400 men, which, though it did little or no execution, terrified Woodage Asahel's men so much, that Confu and Engedan, charging in that instant as upon a signal, they all dispersed through different parts of the field, and their leader after them: Joas's Edjow, indeed,

deed, would not fall back a step upon the volley, but, after an obstinate resistance, they were broken by superior numbers, and forced to retreat before an enemy, so overcome with fatigue and wounds, as to be unable to pursue them.

The whole engagement lasted near an hour by my watch. One hundred and thirteen of Woodage Afahel's men were slain upon the spot, and their bloody trophies brought and thrown before the king. On Confu's side about 70 were killed and wounded; he himself received two wounds, one a large flesh wound in the hip, the other more slight upon the head, both of them at the very beginning of the engagement.

Notwithstanding the natural hardness of his heart, and that the misfortune which had happened was in immediate disobedience of orders, Ras Michael shewed great sensibility at hearing Confu was wounded; he came immediately to see him, a visit not according to etiquette, and gave him a slighter reproof than was expected for leaving his post in the town, as well as for his fighting without his orders. Confu, with great submission and address at the same time, excused his leaving his post, from the repeated information he had received that a decisive battle was to be fought that day, and knowing the Ras's want of horse, he could not stay at Gondar, and keep his idle, when the fate of so kind a father, (as the Ras had been) and that of a mother, to whom he owed every thing, was depending. He said it would

be

be more agreeable to him to die by the hands of the executioner of the camp, as an example for disobedience of orders, than survive with the reflection that he had been voluntarily absent from such an occasion. As for engaging with Asahel Woodage that day, he said he had no intention of that kind; that he knew not who he was when he attacked him, and only endeavoured to hinder him from harrassing the rear of the army, and destroying the provisions: That when he charged him first, Woodage was among the women, loaded with bouza, flour, and spirits, which were coming to the Ras, and great part of which he had intercepted, as the Ras would find. Michael could not help laughing at this last part of the excuse, but went away, and, in his conversation that evening, gave Confu the highest praises for his conduct and bravery, but said nothing of his fault.

Engedan was next arraigned for fighting without orders. He too, answered with great humility, That when he saw the infantry run down the hill, with their matches lighted, he thought it was the Ras's intention to relieve Confu by the most effectual means possible; but at any rate he could never, with his arms in his hands, stand looking on, while his cousin german and companion was massacred by Galla. All ended well. The truth is, Michael never would find fault with a man that fought, however imprudently he fought the occasion: courage was to him in place of charity; it covered a multitude of sins.

Ozoro

Ozoro Esther, in the deepest concern, had attended her son from the moment of his arrival, and had seen his wound dressed and swathed up. A large gaping flesh-wound (such as his was) frightens ignorant people more than the small orifice made by a shot, which breaks bones and endangers life. Such was Ozoro Esther's apprehension; and every minute she enquired of me if I thought it was possible he could recover. I had not quitted him since he had got off his horse. I advised him by all means to go in a litter to Gondar, either carried by men or mules; but no persuasion, nor consideration, would induce him to go otherwise than on a mule, with his horse harnessed and led by him.

Every thing was accordingly prepared, when I received a message from the Ras to wait upon him. I immediately went to his tent, and found him with two dwarf boys only, who were fanning the flies from his face. "Ozoro Esther wishes, says he, that you would see Confu safe to Gondar, and bring us word to-morrow how he is; and you must stay with him altogether, if he is in danger."—"If he has no fever, said I, he is in no danger. If the king and you"—He then interrupted me,—"The king and I, and every one wishes you to attend Confu." I bowed, and went away without reply. When I was got to the door he cried after me, "Don't be afraid, you will be in time enough to see every thing; neither

they nor I wish an engagement but at Serbraxos."

I did not understand the meaning of the speech, but went away without reply straight to the king's tent; and I was just going to speak when he stopt me, by crying, "Go, go, for God's sake! Ozoro Esther has been here almost out of her senses." I went on this to her tent, where I found her sitting by Confu and drowned in tears, which at times were interrupted by fits of seeming distraction. He began to feel the loss of blood, which would have made me wish not to move him; but there was no staying here for sick people; and so violent a spirit had spread through the army, upon Netcho's success and Confu's victory, that one and all insisted upon fighting the next day; and several of my friends, who knew where I was going, shook hands with me at my passing them, saying, "Farewell, Yagoube; we are sorry to lose you, but all will be over before you come back."

I now insisted more than ever upon Confu's going in a litter, and setting out immediately, which was accordingly complied with. Ozoro Esther had dinner, or rather supper, ready in a moment, and I had great need of it, having scarcely tasted any thing for two days. While I was eating, Ozoro Esther could not stop the effusions of her gratitude for the care I had taken of Confu. "I knew, says she, you would have refused me, if I had endeavoured to persuade you to go away from the camp, when there are such fair expectations,

tations, you may be knocked on the head to-morrow; and therefore I applied to the Ras by force to bend that rash, proud spirit of yours, which one day will be the occasion of your death."

"—*Maalam*, said I, you do me injustice if you will not believe that I had rather obey your commands than those of any general upon earth: But, pray, what is the meaning of the Ras's speech to me about both armies willing to fight at Serbraxos? Where is this Serbraxos?"—

"Why, says she, here, on a hill just by the Beginder, people have a prophecy, that one of their governors is to fight a king at Serbraxos, to defeat him, and slay him there: in his place is to succeed another king, whose name is Theodorus, and in whose reign all Abyssinia is to be free from war, or from any trouble, sickness, or famine; that the Galla, Shangalla, and Mahometans are all to be destroyed, and the empire of Abyssinia to be extended as far as Jerusalem."—"All this destruction and conquest without war! That will be curious indeed. I think I could wish to see this Theodorus," said I, laughing. "See him you will," replied *Qasro Esther*; "peace, happiness, and plenty will last all his reign, and a thousand years afterwards. Enoch and Elias will rise again, and will fight and destroy Gog and Magog, and all this without any war."—"On

Serbraxos, abbreviation for *Serba Chistlos*, the Cross of Christ.

which I again said, that must be cleverly managed. And now, why does Ras Michael choose to fight at Serbraxos? I do not think he is desirous to pay his court to the king Theodorus, or any king brought him by Begemder.”—

“Why, says she, all the hermits and holy men on our side, that can prophecy, have assured him he is to beat the rebels this month at Serbraxos; and a very holy man, a hermit from Waldubba, came to him at Gondar, and obliged him to march out against his will, by telling him this prophecy, which he knows to be true, as the man is not like common prophets, but one who never ate any thing but roots, or drank other liquor than water, since the day of his nativity. Such a man as this, you know, Yagoube, cannot lie.”

“And I, says Ayto Confu, being a prophet that hath ate beef and drunk bouza ever since my nativity, whenever I could not get wine or brandy, and who give my share of water freely to the saints of Waldubba, as a proper reward for the lies they tell, I do prophecy, that there are now two thousand men eating their supper within sight of Serbraxos, who will never see it nearer, but will all be slain in a battle fought at this place to-morrow, at which time Yagoube shall be feasting with me at Gondar, without caring a fig for king Theodorus and his plenty.”—“A blessed prophet you!” says Ozoro Esther.

At this instant the servants at the door informed us there was scarce light to see the way down the hill,

hill, and we got our wounded prophet, without much difficulty or complaint, into the litter. A number of men supported him down the hill, and about 50 of his own horse attended. I desired him to feel often the bandage if his wound bled; and, finding it did not, I rode on horse-back close by his side. For some time, not hearing him stir or speak, I thought he was asleep, or had fainted; on which I stooped the litter, felt his pulse, and asked him if he was doing? He said, No; he was thinking of all the lies his mother had been telling me: but there is one thing she did not care to tell you, Yagoube, she says you laugh at these stories; but there is a spirit who always appears to Michael and assures him of victory. The devil, said I, probably; for what good arises from all these victories? are they not the ruin of innocent people, and of the country? No, replied Confu, it is St. Michael the archangel; he saw him just before he surprised the mountain Haramat, but neither at Gondar, nor since he passed the Tacazzé, and this makes him sorrowful. The spirit has been afraid to catch cold, said I, by wetting his feet in that cold river. I doubt so, answered Confu; but the liar of a monk, who my mother supposes never eats nor drinks, told him he was to see him at Serbraxos.

At this time we heard the noise of horses, and could discern (as we thought) three men that passed the bridge of Mogetch briskly before us.

As

As they seemed to avoid us, six or eight of Confu's men pursued them at full gallop, but lost them in the darkness. They, however, were found to be soldiers of Kafmati Samuda, who hearing Woodage Asahel had been engaged with Ayto Confu, had come out with the unworthy purpose of collecting some filthy trophies, by mangling the dead or wounded, though these must have been their own companions, the soldiers of Ayto Confu, who had been slain; for the whole of Woodage Asahel's men had already undergone what Strates emphatically called the *operation*, by the knives of Confu's soldiers. We now arrived at Koscam without any adventure, and Confu was laid to repose, after taking a little food: in obedience to the orders of Ozoro Esther, I lay down by him in the same apartment.

Early next morning I was sent for by a servant of Ozoro Esther, to attend Welleta Selasse, who I was told was at the point of death. I repaired immediately to the house of Ras Michael, where she then was, but found her without possibility of recovery, having already lost her speech. She expired a few minutes afterwards, apparently in violent agonies. The cause was never properly known; some attributed it to the jealousy of Ozoro Esther, others alledged that she had taken poison from apprehension of falling into the hands of Ras Michael: whatever was the truth, her servants certainly told me, that she had confessed she had taken poison, and not till the pain became violent,

violent, and then she turned afraid, would she consent to have an express sent to Ozoro Esther, to bring me from the camp. I had unluckily left it before to attend Ayto Confu, neither is it probable I could have been of any service, as the poison she had taken was arsenic. This accident detained me that whole day, so that, instead of returning to the army, I went to Ayto Confu at Koscam, where I found another messenger in search of me.

The king's Mahometan was returned from Sennaar, and with him Soliman my servant, who brought me answers to the letters I had written; they had come by Beyla to Ras el Feel, by Sim Sim, and the western deserts, the way to Teawa being much infested by gangs of Arabs, and Ganjar horse, who murdered every body they found in their way. They brought with them only twelve horses, eighteen coats of mail, and about thirty libds*; these were mostly returns made by the principal members of government to the presents the king had sent them, for every body at Sennaar now set too great a value upon the armour, and horses, to part easily with them, on account of the unsettled state of the times, the history of which we shall give afterwards.

* These are leather coats quilted with cotton, used instead of coats of mail: both man and horse are covered with them, and they give to both a monstrous appearance.

My

My letters informed me that the whole kingdom of Sennaar was in arms, that Nasser (who had deposed his father by the help of two great brothers, Mahomet Abou Calec, and Adelan) was upon the point of trusting his life and kingdom to the event of a battle with these two officers. I was, moreover, conjured, with all the earnestness, as I thought, of a truly honest man, that I would by no means undertake the journey I intended; that to come from Ras el Feel to Sennaar, was, for a white man like me, next to an absolute impossibility, connecting the danger of the way with the great hardships from the excessive heat of the climate, and want of food and water; that even arrived at Sennaar, I should be in the utmost danger from the soldiery, and the king's slaves, under no subordination or government; and that, even if I was happy enough to escape these, the worst still remained, and no human power could convoy or protect me, in my remaining journey to Egypt through the great desert. I was therefore begged to lay all such intention aside as impossible, and either stay where I was, or return by Tigré, Masuah, and Arabia, the way by which I first entered Abyssinia. This was the severest of all blows to me, and threw me for some time into the lowest despondency, but it did not change my resolution, which was already taken, not to turn to the right or the left, but either complete my journey to Syene, the frontier

tier of Egypt, by Sennaar, and Nubia, or perish in the attempt.

I now resolved to proceed immediately to the camp, taking twenty horse from Sanuda, and twenty from Confu, to escort the coats of mail and horses from Sennaar. I set out that evening with Mahomet the king's servant, by the road of Sema Confu, and arrived about nine o'clock in the camp, without any adventure, bringing the news of Welleta Selassé's death, which seemed to cause neither surprise nor sorrow, and was never after spoken of either by the Ras or Ozoro Esther; but very great rejoicings were made at the good accounts of Ayto Confu, with very kind expressions of me, both from the Ras and Ozoro Esther.

Before he went to bed, the king had examined Mahomet, and drawn from him the true state of the kingdom of Sennaar; he then sent for me, and ordered me to deliver him my letters, which I did, interpreting them to him, word for word. He said, however, but little at this time, as he thought that that door, being so effectually shut against me, less could be urged against the safer, and more known road through Tigré, which, of course, it was presumed I should more eagerly embrace; he kept my letters; and ordered me to choose two of the horses for myself, which I did, one of them near seventeen hands high, I suppose one of the most powerful horses in the world. The rest he distributed among the black troops; the

the same he did with the coats of mail. I found the army in great spirits, but still the story of fighting only at Serbraxos seemed to be obstinately persisted in. I asked Ozoro Esther if St. Michael had yet appeared to the Ras; she answered, "Hush! for God's sake, don't make a joke of this, one word of this kind repeated to him would prevent your ever receiving a favour from Michael."

It happened that, the day after I had attended Ayto Confu to Gondar, Ras Michael sent some soldiers into Dembea to forage, these had been intercepted by a party posted on purpose by Kasmati Ayabdar and Gusho, consisting of Edjow Galla, with some horse from Foggora and Amhara. An engagement happened pretty much in the same place and manner as that with Woodage Asabel and Ayto Confu, in full view of the camp, and assistance was sent on both sides to the respective parties. The troops commanded by Aylo, brother of Engedan, and Guebra Mascal, were beaten back almost close to the camp, by the horse led by the Edjow Galla, though brave and veteran soldiers, while Ras Michael ordered Yafine and his 200 from Ras el Feel, (all with their libds on) to charge the Galla, now advanced very near. Each horse had a number of brass bells at his neck, and they no sooner appeared than the whole cavalry of the enemy, starting at the hideous figure and noise, fell into confusion, and, being closely pressed with violent blows of their great

great swords, no longer disputed the ground, but left the field on the gallop. A beautiful grey horse of Gusho's, superbly ornamented with gold and silver, and having a very rich broad sword hanging at his saddle, and a pole-ax on the other side under the surcingle, was taken by some soldiers of Ras el Feel, who spread the report instantly that Gusho was slain. Immediately on this, orders were given for the whole army to descend into the plain, which they did with great alacrity, forming in order of battle, though neither the king nor Ras Michael left the camp, nor did any adversary appear; and the troops, content with this bravado, returned again in great spirits to the camp.

This is the account I heard of that day's skirmish, for I was not present there, being at Gondar with Ayto Confu. In the evening of that very day arrived a messenger from Gusho, telling Ras Michael, that a young boy, a nephew of his, had without his knowledge, gone to see the engagement, and had taken with him his favourite horse, who, being frightened at the Arabs with their libds, had thrown him, after which he had run off and left the horse among the enemy. He begged to have his horse restored at any price, if the man that had taken him was allowed to sell him. He at the same time sent a present of a large quantity of fruit and fresh fish from the lake. The messenger was a priest well known by Ras Michael, and warmly attached to the king, and
it

it was thought came with an errand of more consequence than either about the horse or the fish. The Ras sent him for his answer to the king, who told him, the horse being taken by the troops of Ras el Feel, belonged to me, and with me he must make his bargain: that I was at Gondar, and my return uncertain; but that the next day he might have my answer. This was the better to conceal the priest's real business, for the king and Ras knew how they were to dispose of the horse; at least they certainly knew I was not to return him without their orders.

The morning after my arrival this same priest came to me with a message from Gusho, desiring I would send him his horse, as a proof of the friendship which he said had always subsisted between us, at the same time offering me any sum of money that I might have promised to content the soldiers who took him. As I had before obtained leave from Ras Michael to restore the horse, so I did it with the very best grace possible, sending Yafine himself, chief of the troops of Ras el Feel, with the message to Gusho, that I reckoned myself exceedingly happy in having that opportunity of obliging him, and of shewing the value I had ever set upon his friendship; that he very well knew the little regard I had for money, and that the soldier who took the horse was my servant, and had already been abundantly satisfied. I desired Yafine to add, that I hoped, in order to a continuation of that friendship, he would

would avoid, in his own particular command, or in that of his relations, attacking where the king was in person, because it was my indispensable duty to be there, and that his nephew might not escape with the loss of a horse, if he again happened to be engaged with the Moorish troops, who, though under my command, were Mahometans, strangers to the language, and to whom it was impossible for me to convey any distinction of persons. Gusko was exceedingly sensible of this civil return of the horse; he cloathed Yafine magnificently, made him a present of another horse, and sent a very flattering message by him to me.



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 would

C H A P. XXV.

Michael attempts to enter Begemder—First Battle of Serbraxos—The Rebels offer Battle to the King in the Plain—Armies separated by a violent Storm.

YASINE had scarcely returned to the camp when all the tents were struck, and the army on its march. The Ras and Guebra Mascas led the van, the king and Guebra Christos the center, Kasmati Kefla Yafous the rear; Netcho the Fit-Auraris being about half an hour's march before us, we proceeded along the plain without interruption; Ayto Engedan, with a small body of horse, was covering the king's right flank at some distance. The church of Serbraxos was on our left upon the side of a hill, and we expected to see the Fit-Auraris take up his ground for encamping there, as it was the field of action determined upon by both parties. The Fit-Auraris, however, first, and then Ras Michael with the van, passed below Serbraxos at so brisk a pace that we in the center found it difficult to keep up with them.

A long

PLAN
of
THE FIRST BATTLE
OF
SERBRAXOS
Fought 16 May:
1777.



A long valley, having the mountains of Begemder on the south, or farthest end, was what the Ras had now entered, and he flattered himself, by a forced march, to arrive at those mountains. When once in Begemder, he knew that he not only should occasion a revolt among the troops of Powussen, (many of whom had followed him by force rather than inclination) but likewise he was assured that he should be met by many powerful noblemen and friends to the king, both of Lasta and Begemder, whom Powussen dared not force to follow him, and who had staid at home; by this means, he conceived his army would be so much increased that he soon should bring the rebels to reason.

The river Mariam runs along the west side of this valley, shallow, but brisk and clear, and the water excellent, while a small brook, called Deg-Ohha, (that is, the water of honour, or of worth) falling from the mountains on the east, runs close by the bottom of the hill of Serbraxos, where it joins the Mariam. The center of the army was just entering from the plain into the valley, and the king's horse passing Deg-Ohha, when we heard a firing in the front, which we guessed to be from the Fit-Auraris; soon after followed a repeated firing from the van, engaged about a short two miles distance, though a long even hill in the midst of the valley, and its windings, hindered us from seeing them.

Guebra

Guebra Christos immediately made his disposition; he placed his horse, and foot in the intervals of the horse, in the middle of the valley; his musquetry on the right and left, the former upon the skirts of the hill already mentioned, to run along the valley; the latter up the skirts of the hill of Serbraxos. Orders very soon arrived from Ras Michael, which did not alter the disposition; and Kessa Yafous with the rear arriving at the same time, just joined and doubled the several posts as they had been taken; our position was to the utmost of our wish; but it had not been so with Michael, for he no sooner had got into the plain, where he had the hills no longer either on his right or left, than he was attacked by Powussen, with the whole force of Begemder, who cut off the troops of his Fit-Auraris to a man, he, and two or three common soldiers, only escaping. This was owing to Michael's retreating instead of supporting him; for he had scarcely given time for Powussen to come up with his horse, who fought more desperately than was their usual custom, than he himself again took possession of the entrance of the valley, and lined the hill on both sides with fire-arms. A very general and sharp fire from Guebra Mascal, and the musquetry, (who had occupied the south end of the long hill) soon obliged Powussen to leave Michael's cavalry, which he would else have inevitably destroyed, and shelter himself in the plain from the violent effect of the shot, which poured upon him

alternately from the hills on each side of the valley.

At this time we were in the greatest anxiety, from the report of the musquets always coming nearer us, though, by the contrary winds, the smoke was carried from us. The day was far advanced, and excessively hot: the foot soldiers were busy in giving our horses drink out of our own helmets, which they filled from Deg-Ohha. All the troops were impatient, however, to come to an action upon that ground. At this time an officer from Michael came to Kefla Yafous, who was on horseback near the king, ordering him to send a body of fresh horse to support the cavalry of his division, with an intention, if possible, to bring on a general engagement. In the mean time he ordered Kefla Yafous to keep firm, as he then was, in the post of Serbraxos, and not to advance till he was sure that Gusho and Ayabdar had left their ground, joined Powussen, and were engaged with him at the south end of the valley. These instructions were perfectly understood by that sagacious and veteran general. He detached 500 Shoa, with near the same number of horse belonging to Engedan, and commanded by him, and these, joined to the cavalry already in the van, again attempting to pass the plain, were attacked by Powussen and the troops of Begemder, who had been likewise reinforced, and after an obstinate engagement they had retired into the mouth of the valley, not from being actually beaten, but

by direction of Ras Michael, in order to bring the enemy pursuing them under the fire of the musquetry, on each side of the entrance of the valley.

I was exceedingly curious to have seen this engagement, and I begged Kefla Yafous to speak to the king to permit me to go singly with Engedan. To this, however, I had a flat refusal, not without some marks of peevishness and displeasure, which Kefla Yafous qualified by saying, "Don't be dismayed, you shall see;" and in that instant the word was given to march to the right, whilst the troops left the valley between the long hill and the mountains, and took post on the side of the river Mariam, with their faces fronting the west. The musquetry was placed upon the eminences to the north and south, as if to defend the ford of the river, through which the entrance was, to the north end of the valley. Michael, in the mean time, had, by the feigned retreat of his cavalry, decoyed the Begemder troops within reach of the musquetry, and they were again put in disorder by the discharge on each side of the hill, without being able to advance a step further; after which he ordered some tents to be pitched upon the hill on his right, as if intending to encamp there.

Kasmati Ayabdar, who commanded the left wing of the rebels, imagining that the whole army had advanced to the south of the valley with Ras Michael, thought this was an opportunity of surrounding

rounding the king's troops, and cutting them off from their camp and strong post upon the hill of Serbraxos; with this intention he advanced rapidly to the ford of the river Mariam, thinking to take post on the hill which was to our rear, being that of Serbraxos. When he advanced, however, near that river, and saw the king and his cavalry drawn up on the banks of it, his heart failed him, and he halted within a short quarter of a mile of our troops. In order to decoy and make him more confident, Kefla Yafous ordered the horse to retreat and cross the river as fast as they could, with an appearance of confusion, that he might draw their horse within reach of our musquetry planted upon every eminence. The king shewed great reluctance at this manœuvre, however wise. He repeated very peevishly, What is this! What is this! Am I retiring before rebels?—Neither did this stratagem succeed but in part, for Ayabdar, either distrusting the trap laid for him, or afraid to enter into an engagement with the king, advanced but a few paces, and again halted, apparently not decided what he was to do.

The Edjow Galla alone advanced to the very brink of the river, and when the musquetry began to be fired at them, which would probably quickly have put them into confusion, the king, losing all patience, ordered the black horse, and all the heavy-armed troops, to charge them, which was instantly executed with the greatest speed; the Galla were

all borne down, with little or no resistance, by the length of our pikes, and the superior weight of our horses, and those that were not slain were scattered over the plain. But a greater misfortune befel us from our friends than from our enemies, as a volley of shot was poured upon us from Serbraxos hill, on the right hand, which killed seven men, notwithstanding their coats of mail. The king himself was in great danger, being in the middle of the engagement, and unarmed; young prince George, who fought by his side, was shot in the thumb of his left hand. Kefla Yafous, who saw the danger the king was in, riding about, holding out his hand and crying not to fire, was shot through the hair, the ball just grazing his head above the ear, and another wounding his horse just above his thigh, but so slightly, that it was afterwards extracted by a servant's fingers.

Ayabdar, after the loss of his Edjow Galla, retreated to the camp, amidst the curses and imprecations of the army, who, not informed of the king's strength, thought the war might have been ended by a proper exertion and perseverance in his part that day. Gusho his nephew, who had staid to guard the camp, but who had reinforced Powussen and Ayabdar each of them with a part of his troops, spoke of his uncle in the bitterest terms of reproach, continually calling him dotard and coward, and declaring him incapable of command or service. Whether this was really his opinion, or only said with a view of forwarding a scheme already

already laid, I will not say; but certainly it was the foundation of a quarrel which, by its consequences, did greatly weaken the rebels, and contributed much afterwards to maintain the king upon the throne; for Gushe, who, upon the defeat of Ras Michael, was destined by all parties to take the lead, was as lavish in praises of Powussen for his behaviour that day, as he was bitter in condemning his uncle, which created a violent misunderstanding between these two chiefs, inasmuch that Asahel Woodage, with his troops of Maitsha, left Ayabdar, and joined Powussen. Confu, moreover, son of Basha Eusebius, and brother to Guebra Mehedin, who had frustrated my first attempt to discover the source of the Nile, endeavouring to promote a revolt among the troops of Foggora, to which he belonged, was put in irons by Ayabdar, from which he was but too soon released to meet, a few days afterwards, a fate that put an end to his profligacy and follies.

Powussen in this conflict had retreated, if not beaten, with a considerable loss; nine hundred of his best troops were said to have been slain that day, and a great many more wounded, most of whom (those I mean that had gun-shot wounds) died from the want of surgeons, and the ignorance of those who undertook to cure them. On the part of Michael about 300 men, all of the cavalry, were said to have perished that day, including the troops of Necho the Fit-Auraris. Of the king's division about twenty-three were killed,
seven

seven of these being his guards, I believe mostly by the unfortunate fire of the troops, arising from his own impatience in attacking the Galla unadvisedly, of whom about sixty were left upon the field, all slain in the attack, for they were not pursued, but joined their main body immediately.

Ras Michael fell back upon the army, which had encamped on the hill of Serbraxos; and it was now believed more than before, that the fate of the empire was to be determined on that spot. Another thing, however, appeared plain, that whatever belief Michael pretended in the prophecy, he would not have preferred fighting at Serbraxos, if he could by any means have given the rebels the slip, and marched his army into Begemder. The king was exceedingly pleased at the part he had taken that day; it was the first time he was engaged in person, nor did any body venture to condemn it; he shewed, indeed, very little concern at his brother's wound, which was only a slight one in the fleshy part of his thumb, nor did the young prince trouble himself much about it; on the contrary, when I went to dress and bind it up, he said to me, I wish, Yagoube, the shot had carried the thumb off altogether, it would have made me incapable of succeeding to the throne, and they would not then send me to the hill of Wechné. The king, upon hearing this, said with a smile, George forgets that Hatzé Hannes, my father and his, was called to the throne many years after his whole hand had been cut off.

Every

Every one agreed that Ras Michael had that day shewn a degree of intrepidity and military skill superior to any thing which had appeared in many former engagements in which he had commanded. No sooner had he refreshed himself with a meal, than he called a council of his officers, which lasted great part of the evening, notwithstanding the fatigue he had undergone throughout the day.

This was the first battle of Serbraxos, which, though it contained nothing decisive, had still two very material consequences, as it so daunted the spirits of the Begemder horse, that many chiefs of that country withdrew their troops, and went home, whilst such discord was sown among the leaders, that I believe they never sincerely trusted one another afterwards; Gusso and Ayabdar, in particular, were known to correspond with the king daily.

On the morrow after the battle, three messengers arrived from Gusso, Powussen, and Ayabdar, and each had a separate audience of the King and Ras, before whom they all three severally declared, that their masters desired to continue in allegiance to him their king, Tecla Haimanout, but under this condition only, that Ras Michael should be sent to his government of Tigré, never more to return. They endeavoured to persuade the king also to take the sense of his army, the majority of which, they asserted, were ready to abandon him. If Michael should agree to return to Tigré, they offered to carry the king to Gondar, place him

him in his palace, and allow him to choose his own ministers, and governor for the future after his own ideas. This, indeed, was the universal wish, and I did not see what Ras Michael could have done, had he adopted it; but fear, or gratitude, or both, restrained the young king from such a measure; and the messengers left him after a plain declaration, That they had endeavoured all in their power to save him, and he must now abide the consequences, for they washed their hands of them.

The rains were now become more frequent, and an epidemical fever had shewn itself in the rebel army on the plain; every consideration, therefore, seemed to promise a speedy decision, but the consequences of the last engagement seemed to have damped the spirit of the rebels, without having much raised that of the king's army. In fact, the days were dark and wet, and the nights cold, circumstances in which no Abyssinian chooses to fight. The army was thinly clothed, or not clothed at all, and encamped on high ground, where fuel, though it had not failed them yet, must soon have done so.

An accident that happened this night had nearly brought about a revolution which the wisest heads had laboured for many years in vain. Ras Michael had retired to bed at his ordinary time, somewhat before eleven o'clock, and a lamp was left burning as usual in his tent, for he was afraid of spirits. He was just fallen asleep, when he felt

felt a man's arm reach into the bed over him, which he immediately seized hold of, crying to his attendants, at the same time, for help. Those that ran first into the tent threw down the lamp and put out the light, so that the man would have escaped, had not the people behind got about him, and endeavoured to hold him down, while entangled in, and struggling with the cords of the tent. The first person that seized him was a favourite servant of the Ras, a young man named Laeca Mariam, of a good family in Tigré; he, not perceiving his danger for want of light, received a stab with a broad knife, which pierced his heart, so that he fell without speaking a word. Numbers immediately secured the assassin, who was found to have dropt one knife within the Ras's tent, with which he had attempted at first to have stabbed him: but he was found to have another knife, two-edged, and sharp in the point, fixed along his arm, with which he had stabbed Laeca Mariam. This wretch was a native of a very barbarous nation near Shoa, S. E. of Gogjam. The name of their country is Guragué. They are Troglodytes, and all robbers: their constant occupation is attending the Abyssinian camps, and stealing horses, mules, or whatever they can get, which they do in a very singular manner.

They all wear their hair very short, strip themselves starknaked, and besmear themselves from head to foot with butter, or some sort of grease, whilst,

whilst, along the outside of their arm, they tye a long, straight, two-edged, sharp-pointed knife, the handle reaching into the palm of their hand, and about four inches of the blade above the knob of their elbow, so that the whole blade is safe and inoffensive when the arm is extended, but when it is bent, about four inches projects, and is bare beyond the elbow joint; this being all prepared, they take a leafy faggot, such as the gatherers of fuel bring to the camp, which they fasten to their middle by a string or withy, spreading it over to conceal or cover all their back, and then drawing in their legs, they lie down, in all appearance, as a faggot, and in the part of the camp they intend to rob, crawling slowly in the dark when they think they are unperceived, and lying still when there is any noise or movement near them: In case they find themselves discovered, they slip the faggot and run; and whatever part of them you seize escapes your fingers by reason of the grease. If you endeavour to clasp them, however, which is the only way left, the Guraguè bends his elbow and strikes you with his knife, and you are mortally wounded, as was the case with Laeca Mariam.

The assassin was no sooner secured and disarmed, than a noose, with a running knot, was slipped round his neck, and his hands tied behind his back, in which manner he was carried before Ras Michael, who sat upon a stool at some distance from his tent, after every part of it had been searched.

searched. The fellow at first refused to speak, but being threatened with torture, answered, in his own language, which I did not understand. He was asked, who had employed him to attempt that assassination? He said, The rebels; and named Gusho and Powussen: he then varied, and said the Iteghé employed him. Before he was sent away he contradicted all this, and declared, that Hagos, his brother, had employed him; and that he was then actually in the camp, with four others, who were determined to murder the Ras and Guebra Mascal, whatever it should cost them.

A search was on this ordered through all the camp, but no stranger found, excepting one of the same nation, who had planted himself and his faggot near the tent of the Abuna; and who being seized, examined, and promised pardon, declared himself absolutely ignorant of any scheme but robbing, for which purpose three of them, he said, had come into the camp together; one of them had stolen two mules the night before, and gone off, and that he was that night intending to take away two of the Abuna's mules; and he supposed his companion had the same intention with regard to the Ras; but as to murder, or any other plot, he knew nothing of it. Being put slightly to the torture, he persisted in his declaration; and when interrogated, declared, that they all three had come from Guragué with Amila Yafous, to load and unload his baggage, and
take

take care of his beasts: that none of them had been at Gondar before the attempt, except the assassin, who had formerly lived there some years, but whether with Hagos, or any other, he did not know, nor did he ever hear him pronounce the name of Hagos, nor see any stranger, whom he did not know, converse with him: that they all three had lain the last night at the church of Serbraxos: but he further declared, that the person apprehended spoke the Amharic language as well as his own, contrary to what the villain had all along pretended.

This declaration, which I heard from the king's secretary, word for word as it was given, threw all the council into great confusion, the more so, that, being gently talked to, and food given him after his examination, at night the assassin had again repeated what he before said about Gulho, and that Fasil, too, was accessary to the attempt. And what made this labyrinth of lies still more intricate was, that it was certainly known that Hagos, his brother, had constantly lived with Coque Abou Barea, in Kuara, from the time Ras Michael had put his brother to death at Gondar. It was intended therefore to try the effect of further torture in the morning, to make him confess the truth, but his guards, however, having fallen asleep, or gone out of the tent, he was found strangled by the running noose that was left round his neck; nor was any further light ever thrown upon this affair at any time after; but

but it was generally believed the attempt had been made at the instigation of some connection of the Iteghé, and there were some who went so far as to name Welleta Israel.

Early in the morning some priests came from Powussen, Ayabdar, and Gusso, to take the most solemn oaths before the Abuna, that they never had the smallest knowledge of what the assassin had laid to their charge; and they took upon themselves sentence of excommunication, which the Abuna then pronounced conditionally, if they had directly, or indirectly, been principal or accessory, or known, or been consulted, in any manner whatever, as to the designs of that assassin. Several principal officers of the rebels, moreover, who had left Gondar and gone over to Fasil, and who were there in Gusso's camp, came over to congratulate with Ras Michael upon his escape, so that, for a moment, one would have thought the whole country interested in saving him whom all were actually in arms at that instant to destroy. What surprised me most of all, probable as the thing might seem to be, not one man in the camp, from the Ras and King downward, seemed to think that this attempt of the Guragué had been in any shape the plot of the rebels; and yet, in old times, murder by treason must have been very frequent in his kingdom, as appears by their customs preserved to this day; no person, be their station, connection, or friendship

ship what it will, can offer any one meat or drink without tasting it before them.

Proposals of peace followed this friendly intercourse, but the condition being always that Michael should depart to Tigré, which he thought was but in other terms a proposal to destroy him, these friendly overtures ended in defiance and protestation, That to him alone was owing the effusion of human blood, and the ruin of his country, which was immediately to follow.

It was the 17th of May, at night, the attempt had been made on the Ras's life; and the 18th was spent in excommunication before the Abuna; and, in the evening, Michael received intelligence, that Ayto Tesfos, from the mountains of Samen, and Heraclius and Samuel Mammo, from Walkayt and Tzegadé, were both preparing to join the rebels with a considerable force. We were now arrived at the fatal field of Serbraxos, as we had endeavoured to pass it, but in vain; nothing now remained but to try to which side the devil (the father of lies) had been forced to tell the truth, or whether he had yet told it to either. Darion, a principal man of Belesan, and Guigarr of Lasta, joined the Ras's army about noon, bringing with them 1200 men, chiefly horsemen, good troops, and they were joyfully received.

A council was held with all the great officers that evening, and the order of battle fixed upon for next day. Kessa Yafous, with the best of the
foot

foot from Tigré, with the king's household troops, the Shoa horse, and the Moors of Ras el Feel, with their libds, (in all not amounting to 10,000 men, but the flower of the army) composed the left wing, in the center of which was the king in person, the heavy-armed black horse before him, and the officers and nobility surrounding him: Guebra Christos, and Kasmati Tesfos of Siré, commanded the center, in which was Darion and Guigarr's cavalry, for the Lasta men, though of different sides, could never be prevailed upon to fight against one another, so instead of being with the king against Begemder and Lasta, they were placed in the center against Gusho and Amhara. The right of the king's army was commanded by Welleta Michael and Billetana Gueta Tecla, opposed to the left wing of the rebels, under Kasmati Ayabdar, who had lately received large reinforcements from Gojam, by means of the Iteghé, who well knew him to be an inveterate enemy to Ras Michael, and one who would never make peace with him.

I have often heard it observed by officers of skill and experience, that nothing is more difficult to describe than a battle, and that as many descriptions as are given of it, they generally disagree, and seem as many different battles. To this I shall add, that I find as great difficulty in giving an idea of the ground on which a battle was fought, which perhaps is not the case with professional men; and though I describe nothing but
 what

what I saw, and what my horse passed over, still I very much doubt if I can make myself intelligible to my readers. The hill of Serbraxos was neither very high nor steep, unless on the north and east, where it was almost a precipice. It was not a mountain joined with others, as the bed of a torrent, that ran very rapidly from Beleffen south of Mariam Ohha, divided it from these mountains. The west side of it sloped gently to a large plain, which extended to the brink of the lake Tzana, and upon this our rear was encamped. The S. W. side of this hill was like the former, and about half a mile from it came an elbow of the river Mariam, so called from a church in the plain: on this side of the hill our center was encamped with the king, Abuna, and the princesses; whilst on the south face (which looked down a valley) was Ras Michael and the van of the army: the hill here was considerably steeper, and I have already said ended with the precipice on the north. Along the bottom of this south face of the hill lay the small stream called Deg-Ohha, which stood in pools, and was the safest and readiest supply for the army, as being perfectly under command of our musquets, where our horses could water without danger: immediately south from this ran a valley full half a mile broad, which ended in a large plain about two miles off.

The valley where Michael and the van first engaged, was formed by the hills of Beleffen on the east,

east, and the river Mariam on the west, and near the middle of the valley there was a low and flat-topped hill, not above 30 yards in height, which did not join with the hill of Serbraxos. Between them there was an opening of about 100 yards, through which ran Deg-Ohha, to the ford of the river Mariam, from which you ascended in a direction nearly N. W. up into the plain which reached to the lake Tzana. On the south end of this hill, as I have said, which might have been about two miles in length, the banks of the Mariam are very high, and the river stands in large deep pools, with banks of sand between them. Where this hill ends to the right is another ford of the river Mariam, where a deep and narrow sandy road goes winding up the banks, in a direction N. W. like the former, and leads to the same plain bordering on the lake Tzana: so that the plain of the valley where the Mariam runs, which is bordered by the foot of the mountains of Belessen, and continues along the plain south to Tangouré, is near 200 feet lower than the plain that extends on the side of the lake Tzana. Nor is there a convenient access from the plain to the valley, at least that I saw, by reason of the height and steepness of the banks of the Mariam, excepting those two already mentioned; one between the extremity of the long even hill, and slope of the mountain on the north, and the other on the south, through the winding sandy road upon the steep banks of the river, by

the south end of that low hill, as I have already said. At these two places are the two fords of the river, which continue passable even in the rainy season, and the water at that time stands in pools below it, till several miles further it joins the Zingetch Gomara, a larger stream than itself, whose banks are low, and where the stream is fordable also; but the banks of the river Mariam continue steep, and run in a southern direction. In this valley, at the south end of this hill near the ford was the engagement between Michael with the van, and the Begemder troops, on the 16th; at the ford on the north end of this hill, in the same valley, was the fight between the light troops and Kasmati Ayabdar, and the king in person, the very same day; so that the valley was perfectly known by the enemy, and as they had few or no musquetry, was wisely considered as not fit ground for their purposes, being narrow and commanded by hills every where.

On the 19th of May, word was brought that the whole rebel army was in motion, and before eight o'clock (reckoned in Abyssinia an early hour for such business) a great cloud of dust was seen rising on the right of the rebels towards Korreva, and this was the moment the Begemder troops got on horseback in the dusty plain; soon after we heard their kettle-drums, and about nine o'clock we saw the whole troops of Begemder appear, drawn up at such a distance in the plain, above the road up the steep bank of the Mariam,

as to leave great room for us to form with the road on our left, and a little on our rear; Michael easily divined Powuffen's intention, which was to beat us back by a superior force of horse, and then making a number of troops glide below unseen, along the river in the valley, take possession of the round hill, at the north ford of Mariam, and cut off our retreat to our camp at Serbraxos; the Ras immediately dispatched some single horsemen to take a view of the enemy more nearly, and report what their numbers were, and where Gulho and Ayabdar were posted, for we could distinguish the colour of the horses, and all the movements of the Begemder troops, not being much above three miles distance, yet we did not know whether they were alone, or whether one or more of the other generals were with them: we saw indeed Powuffen's standards, but they were so weather-beaten and faded, that we could not distinguish their real colours, which were blue and yellow,

The king's whole army was descending into the valley, and passing over the ford of the Mariam, to the plain above where Kefla Yafous was riding to and fro with great earnestness, encouraging his troops. In a very short time the left was formed; the Ras, having given all his orders, and taken to himself the charge of the camp and the reserve, sat down, as was usual, to play at drafts with the black servants. The army was now all in the plain, when the scouts arrived, and brought

word that Gusko and Ayabdar had both taken their ground, not directly in a straight line from Powussen, square with the lake, but as it were diagonally declining more to the southward, so that the most advanced, or nearest to us, were the troops of Begemder; and this was probably done, in order that, our backs being more turned to the lake, we might be easier cut off from our camp, and surrounded in the plain, between their army and the Tzana, if Powussen was so fortunate as to beat the king and the left; but this disposition of these troops was out of our fight, being down nearer the lake. Nor is it to be understood that I mean here to give any account of their movements, or of any other, unless those of the left wing under the king, where I was myself engaged.

Several spies came in to Ras Michael at this time, and they, and the horsemen that had been sent on the service, all agreed, that in the center of the Begemder horse a large red standard was displayed, with a number of kettle drums beating before it, which the Ras no sooner heard, than giving his draft-board a kick with his foot, he overturned the whole game, and afforded, at least, a bad omen of the future engagement. He then called for Kefla Yafous, and Guebra Mascall, and having conferred with them both, he detached Guebra Mascall with five hundred musqueteers to take possession of the hill in the valley below, and

and coast along the left flank of our left without appearing in fight.

The day had been exceeding close, seeming to threaten violent thunder, and we were now come so near as to see directly the large red standard, which being pointed out to the king, he said, smiling with a very chearful countenance, "Aye, aye, now we shall soon see what miracle king Theodorus will work." The clouds had been gathering ever since we went down the hill, and some big drops of rain had fallen. The soldiers were now covering their lighted matches, for fear of more, when first a most violent storm of thunder, lightening, and rain began, then a tempest of rain and wind, and last a dead calm, with such a heavy shower that I scarce ever saw the like even in the rainy season.

Had I been commander of the Begemder troops that day, this shower should have been the signal of charging; for all the king's fire-arms were useless, and the matches wet; but the Begemder horse seemed most uneasy under the fall of rain; they began to be unmanageable, and turn tail to the wind, which now rose and was directly in their faces, and in a few minutes they wheeled about, and retired to their camp. The king halted on the ground where he was, ordered the kettle-drums to beat, and the trumpets to sound; and having continued half an hour till the heavy shower began, he fell back, as did the whole army, and retired to the camp. When he got up the
hill,

hill, and passed the brow where Ras Michael was sitting with some slaves, who held up a piece of sail-cloth over his head to keep off the rain, the servants raised the Ras upon his feet; without any previous salutation, he then asked the king what he had done with king Theodorus? and was answered, "Begemder brought him, and Begemder took him away, we saw nothing but his flag." Lasta carried his flag, says one of the nobility. He is a peaceable prince, says the king; yet he begins with fighting, but he will make amends afterwards, if he governs this country in peace a thousand years. If he does that, says the Ras, Powussen is to die at the next battle, for the thousand years peace will never begin, as long as he is alive.

C H A P. XXVI.

King offers Battle to the Rebels in the Plain—Description of the Second Battle of Serbraxos—Rash Conduct, and narrow Escape of the King—Both Armies keep their Ground.

THE whole evening of the 19th of May was spent in festivity and joy; a prophet from some part in Dembea had foretold the defeat of king Theodorus, and what was much more interesting, two large droves of cattle, the one from Belessen, near Mariam-Ohha, the other from Dembea, were driven that day into the camp. Ras Michael, who knew the value of to-morrow, spared nothing that might refresh the troops this day. The king and he, Ozoro Esther, and Ozoro Al-tah, Kessa Yafous, and the Abuna himself, gave each of them entertainments to the principal officers of the army, and all those who were likely to bear the burden of the ensuing conflict. The soldiers were in great spirit, but it was now very generally known that the officers were mostly dis-
affected,

affected, engaged in private treaties, and in daily expectations of peace.

A very short council was held at the king's tent; all that could be resolved upon had been already fixed the day before, and little had happened since to occasion any alteration. All the young nobility were, as usual, at Ozoro Esther's. It was with infinite pity I heard them thoughtlessly praying for a warm and fair day to-morrow, the evening of which many of them were never to see.

Besides the stores that Ozoro Esther always was provided with, the king had sent her two live cattle, wine, brandy, and hydromel; and what was a very unusual condescension, the Ras, immediately after council, came into the tent, and brought with him a fresh supply. He was very gracious and affable, said a number of kind things to every body, and asked me particularly how we drank in England?

I explained to him as well as I could the nature of our toasts, and drinking to the health of our mistresses by their names in bumpers; that our soldiers toasts on such a night as that, if the general honoured them as he did us now with his company, would be, A fair morning, and speedy fight of our enemy. He comprehended it all very easily, and when I saw he did so, I asked if I should give my toast? and he and all the company joining in a loud cry of approbation, I filled a horn with wine, and standing up, for he had
forced

forced us all to be seated, I drink, Long life to the king, health, happiness, and victory, to you, Sir, and a speedy sight of king Theodorus. A violent shout of applause followed. He himself (the soberest of men) would drink his horn full, which he did, with many interruptions from immoderate fits of laughter; the horn went quickly round, and I ventured to prophesy, that, in the thousand years he is to reign, Theodorus will never again be so cheerfully toasted.

The Ras then turning to me said, I wish I had 5000 of your countrymen, Yagoube, to-morrow, such as you are, or such as you have described them. I answered, Would you had one thousand, and I had twenty lives staked upon the issue. Ayto Engedan upon this got up, and passing across the tent in a very graceful manner, kissed the Ras's hand, saying, Do not make us think you undervalue, or distrust your children, by forming such a wish: Yagoube is one of us, he is our brother, and he shall see and judge to-morrow, if we, your own sons, are not able to fight your battle without the aid of any foreigners. Tears, on this, came into the old man's eyes, who took Engedan in his arms, and kissed him; then recommending to us not to sit up late, he withdrew. A great deal of buffoonery followed about toasts, and soon after arrived two officers from the king, desiring to know what was the reason of that violent outcry? by which he meant the shout when we drank the toast. Ozoro Esther answered, We were all
turned

turned traitors, and were drinking the health of king Theodorus. But it was afterwards thought proper to explain the whole matter before the messenger went back, and make them drink the toast also.

Tecla Mariam had not spoken much, her father having sent for her at that time to the king. Before she departed, I begged Ozoro Esther to apologise for me, that I had absented myself, and had not waited upon her in the morning. I intreated her to continue her kind partiality to me the next day, and to judge for ever of the esteem I had for her by my then behaviour. She promised to do so with the utmost complacency and sweetness, and departed.

Soon after this, a servant arrived from Ras Michael, with a magnificent saddle and bridle as a present to Engedan. This man told us that a messenger had come from Waragna Fasil, desiring a place might be marked out for him to encamp, for he was to join the king early in the morning; but nobody gave any credit to this, nor did he, as far as I ever heard, advance a foot nearer the camp. The messenger commanded us all, moreover, to go to bed, which we immediately complied with. I only went to the king's tent, where the company was dispersing, and kissed his hand, after which I retired. In my way home to my tent, I saw a faggot lying in the way, when the story of the Guraguè came presently into my mind. I ordered some soldiers

to separate it with their lances; but it had been brought for fuel, at least no Guragué was there.

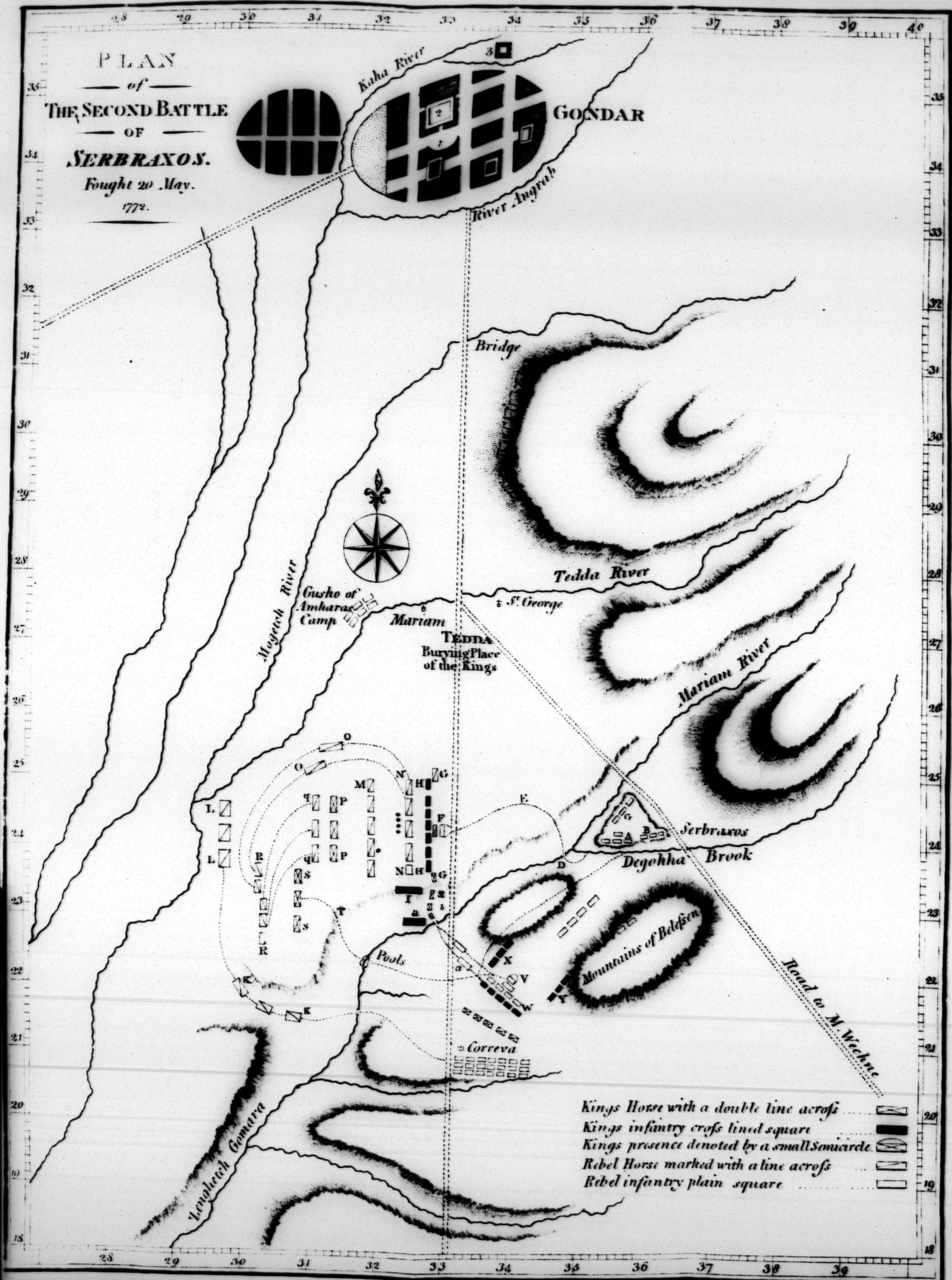
I was no sooner laid upon my bed, than I fell into a profound sleep, which continued uninterrupted till five o'clock in the morning of the 20th. I had spared myself industriously in last night's caroufal, for fear of contributing to a relapse into despondency in the morning; but I found all within serene and composed as it should be; and entirely resigned to what was decreed, I was perfectly satisfied, that the advancing or retarding the day of my death was not in the power of the army of Begemder. I then visited all the horses and the black soldiers, and ordered two or three of them, who were not perfectly recovered from their hurts, to stay in the camp. I afterwards went to the king's tent, who was not yet up; and the very instant after, the Ras's first drum beat, and the king rose; soon after which, the second drum was heard for the soldiers to go to breakfast. I went into the king's tent to kiss his hand, and receive his orders. He told me they were speedily then going to breakfast within, to which meal I was engaged at Ozoro Esther's. He answered, Make haste then, for I am resolved to be on the field before king Theodorus to-day. I am his senior, and should shew him the example. He seemed more than ordinary gay and in spirits.

I finished my breakfast in a few minutes, and took a grateful, but chearful leave of Ozoro Esther,

Esther, and received many acknowledgments, and kind expressions, both from her and Tecla Mariam, who did not fail to be there according to appointment. The day was clear, the sun warm, and the army descended into the plain with great alacrity, in the same order as the day before. Guebra Mascall, with his musqueteers, took possession of the long hill in the valley, and coasted the left flank of our left wing, the river Mariam and its high banks being only between us. The king took his post, with the winding road aforementioned (up the steep banks of the Mariam) close on his left. Guebra Mascall having come to the south end of the hill below, marched briskly up the road, and then advanced about 200 yards, making his men lie down at the brink of the hill next the plain, among bent grass, and thin tall shrubs like Spanish broom, so as to be perfectly out of sight; his line was at right angles with our front, so that his fire must enfilade the whole front of our line.

If not very useful, yet it may, however, be thought curious, to know the disposition of a barbarous army ready to engage in a pitched battle as this was. Kefla Yafous, who commanded the left-wing under the king, placed his cavalry in a line to the opening of the road down into the valley; between every two musquets were men armed with lances and shield; then, at a particular distance, close before this line of horse, was a body of lances, and musquets, or sometimes either
of

PLAN
of
THE SECOND BATTLE
OF
SERBRAXOS.
Fought 20 May.
1772.



Kings Horse with a double line across
Kings infantry cross lined square
Kings presence denoted by a small semicircle
Rebel Horse marked with a line across
Rebel infantry plain square

of them, in several lines, or, as they appeared, a round body of soldiers, standing together without any order at all; then another line of horse, with men between, alternately as before; then another round corps of lances and musquets, advanced just before the line of horse, and so on to the end of the division.

I know nothing of the disposition of the rest of the army, nor the ground they were engaged on; that where we stood was as perfect a plain as that commonly chosen to run races upon, and so I believe was the rest, only sloping more to the lake Tzana.

The king's infantry was drawn up in one line, having a musqueteer between every two men, with lances and shields. Immediately in the center was the black horse, and the Moors of Ras el Feel, with their libds, disposed on each of their flanks. Immediately behind these was the king in person, with a large body of young nobility and great officers of state, about him. On the right and left flank of the line, a little in the rear, were all the rest of the king's horse, divided into two large bodies, Guebra Mascall hid in the bank on our left at right angles with the line, enfilading, as I have already said, the whole line of our infantry; this will be easily understood by consulting the plan where H H, G G, F, and I, represent the disposition that I have now described.

It was full half an hour after the king had formed before the army of Begemder made any motion.

motion. The Ras first saw them from the hill, and made a signal, by beating his drums and blowing his trumpets; this was immediately answered by all the drums and trumpets of the left wing, and for the space of a minute, a thick cloud of dust (like the smoke of a large city on fire) appeared on the side of Korreva, occasioned, as the day before, by the Begemder troops mounting on horseback; the ground where they encamped being trodden into powder, by such a number of men and horse passing over it so often, and now raised by the motion of the horses feet, was whirled round by a very moderate breeze, that blew steadily; it every minute increased in darkness, and assumed various shapes and forms, of towers, castles, and battlements, as fancy suggested. In the middle of this great cloud we began to perceive indistinctly part of the horsemen, then a much greater number, and the figure of the horses more accurately defined, which came moving majestically upon us, sometimes partially seen, at other times concealed by being wrapt up in clouds and darkness; the whole made a most extraordinary, but truly picturesque appearance.

I was so struck with this, that I could not help saying to Billetana Gueta Ammonios, who commanded the horse under me, Is not that a glorious sight, Ammonios! who that was a king, would not be fond of war? David, however, curses those that delight in war, says Ammonios. Therefore,

fore, replied I, there must be pleasure in it, or else no body would fall into a sin that was disagreeable in itself, and at the same time forbidden by God. Well, well, replied Ammonios, this is not a time for argument, see what a glorious spectacle we shall all be before sunset.

At this time Powuffen's whole army was distinctly seen; they came riding backwards and forwards with great violence, more as if they were diverting themselves, than advancing to attack an enemy, of our consequence, that was waiting them. They seemed like two wings, and a main body, each nearly equal in numbers, as far as I could guess, and are described in the plan by the letters L L, but they were sometimes all in one croud together, and in such perpetual motion, that it was impossible to ascertain their precise form.

Four men, upon unruly, high-mettled, or at least ill-broke horses, rode galloping a small space before, conversing together, as if making their observations upon us: they were now arrived at about six hundred yards distance, but it was not a time to make accurate calculation; they then made a stop, and began extending the left of their line to the westward, as described by M M. I suppose, too, their horses needed to breathe a little, after they had so imprudently blown them to no purpose.

In the middle of their cavalry, or rather a little more towards their right, than opposite to the place

place where the king was, a large red flag was seen to rise, and was saluted by the drums and trumpets of their whole army. An accident happened at this moment, which endangered the discovery of the hidden part of our disposition, and which would thereby have destroyed the sanguine hopes we had of victory, and endangered the safety of the whole army. Upon displaying the red flag, two musquets were fired from the post in the face of the hill where Guebra Mascall lay in ambush. Luckily, at that very instant, all the king's drums beat, and trumpets sounded, a kind of mock alarm, (such as the posture-masters and mountebanks use,) in ridicule of king Theodorus, and his red flag then flying before us.

Immediately upon this, as on a signal for battle, the whole army of Begemder set out full gallop, to charge, as at N N, and a long hundred yards before they joined, they received, through the very depth of their squadron, a close well-directed fire from the whole musquetry of Guebra Mascall, and from the king's line an instant after, which put them into the utmost confusion, so that they in part came reeling down upon our line, half wheeled about to the left, as men that had lost their way, with their right, that is, their naked sides exposed as they turned, their shields being in their left. The fire from Guebra Mascall was the signal for our line to charge, and the heavy-armed horsemen, with their pikes, broke through them with little resistance, the line in the mean while,

while, with horse and foot, closed with them, after the musquets had given them their fire, and then staid behind to recharge. Part of their left did not engage at all, but wheeled about, and fled southward over the plain.

While their army was thus separated into two divisions, both in great confusion, the king, with his reserve, fell furiously upon them; and being followed by all the rest of the horse, they pushed the right division (where Powussen was in person) along the plain, but these retired, fighting very obstinately, and often rallying. Kessa Yasous saw the great danger to which the king would quickly be exposed by pursuing the troops of Begemder so far at a distance from his foot, and that they would soon turn upon and overpower him with numbers, and then surround him. He therefore, with great presence of mind, provided for his retreat. He drew up the heavy-armed horse which could not gallop, the Moors of Ras el Feel, and the foot which were left behind, and which had now recharged their firelocks before the narrow road, and ordered Guebra Mascall to resume his station. He then twice, with great earnestness, cried in a loud voice to the soldiers, The king's safety depends upon you,—Stand firm, or all is lost. After which, he galloped, with a small body of horse, to join the king, closely engaged at a considerable distance: The foot that had pursued, or were scattered, now came in by tens and twelves, and joined the heavy-armed

Vol. IV. T t horse,

horse, so that we began again to shew a very good countenance. Among these, a common soldier of the king's household, busied in the vile practice of mangling and spoiling the dead, found the red colours of king Theodorus lying upon the field, which he delivered me, upon promise of a reward, and which I gave a servant of my own to keep till after the engagement.

At this instant Guebra Mascall came up from below the bank, leaping and flourishing his gun about his head, and crying, just before my horse, "Now, Yagoube, stand firm, if you are a man." "Look at me, you drunken slave, said I, armed, or unarmed, and say, it is not a boast if I count myself at all times a better man than you. Away to your hiding-hole again, and for your life appear within my reach. Away! you are not now, as the other day, before the king." The man cried out in a transport of impatience, "By G—d, you don't know what I mean; but here they all come, stand firm, if you are men;" and saying this, he ran nimbly off, and hid himself below the bank, with his lighted match in one hand, and all ready.

It is proper, for connection's sake, though I did not myself see it, to relate what had happened to the king, who had pursued the Begemder horse to a very considerable distance, and was then at S S in the plan, when the whole army of the rebels that had not engaged, observing the resistance made by Powuilen, and part of the division which
they

they had left, turned suddenly back from their flight, and at R R nearly surrounded the king and his cavalry, whom they had now driven to the steepest part of the bank of the Mariam. Kefla Yafous's arrival, indeed, and his exerting himself to the utmost, fighting with his own hand like any common soldier, had brought some relief; yet as fresh horse came in, there can be little doubt at the end, that the king must have been either slain or taken prisoner, if Sertza Denghel, a young man of Amhara, a relation of Gusho, and who had a small post in the palace, had not dismounted, and offered to lead the king's horse down the steepest of the banks into the river. To this, however, he received an absolute refusal. "I shall die here this day, says the king, but while I have a man left, will never turn my back upon the rebels." Sertza Denghel hearing this vain discourse, and seeing no time was to be lost, took hold of the bridle by force, at T, and happily led the horse along one of the sheep-paths, slanting down the declivity of the bank. The king having in vain threatened displeasure, and even death, with the butt-end of his lance, in despair, struck Sertza Denghel in the mouth, and beat out all his fore-teeth. A bank of gravel, like a bridge, separated two deep pools, in the river Mariam, over which the king escaped, though with difficulty, the ground being foul with quick sand.

All the foot that remained about the king ran down the bank, where the Begemder horse could

not pursue them, and joined him in the valley, where he made the best of his way towards the south side of the long low hill, by the winding road, on the side of which, and just above him, was placed Guebra Mascal. Ras Michael, who saw the dangerous situation and escape of the king, and who had kept Ayto Engedan near for some such purposes, dispatched him with a considerable body of horse, along the low hill, ordering him immediately to join the king, and cover his retreat; he likewise detached a considerable body of musqueteers, and mounted for the greater speed upon mules, who were directed to take post upon the south end of the round hill, below the winding road, while another party possessed themselves of some rocky ground on the south side of the valley. This command was as soon executed as given. Ayto Engedan joined the king, who had lost all his kettle-drums but one, now beating before him, and upon his arrival at the entrance of the valley, the king, at V, turned his face to the enemy, having the musquetry, at X and Y, newly arrived from the camp on his right and left.

Kessa Yasous was immediately acquainted with the king's escape, and, knowing the consequence of protracting time, renewed the engagement with so much vigour, that he pushed the horse of Begemder to some small distance back into the plain. Powuffen, whose only view was to take the king prisoner, and wrest the possession of his person, and with that his authority from Ras Michael, was much disconcerted at the unexpected way by which
the

the king escaped ; he after this halted a little for council, then divided his troops, with one part of which he resolved to go down the winding road, and with the other to pass at the junction of the rivers, and enter the valley in that direction, in order to overtake the king, and intercept him in his way to the camp, in case any thing obstructed his passing the winding road. Kefla Yafous took advantage of this movement, and with his horie made his way to join the heavy-armed troops, and those who had joined the line, standing closely and firmly where they were stationed. .

The first person that appeared was Kefla Yafous, and the horse with him, stretching out his hand, (his face being all besmeared with blood, for he was wounded in the forehead) he cried as loud as he could, Stand firm, the king is safe in the valley. He had scarce faced about, and joined the line, when the enemy approached at a brisk gallop. The Begemder horie were closer than usual, and deeper than the front was broad ; they resembled therefore an oblong square, if they resembled any thing ; but the truth is, they were all in disorder, and their figure, never regular, changed every moment ; the right of their front (which was not equal to ours) was finally placed against the road, being close by Guebra Mascal's post, whose men were much increased in number ; they received the discharge of his whole musquetry in two vollies, so near that I scarce believe that there was one shot that did not take place on
man

man or horse. A great cry from the bank at the same time added to their panic, which was answered by the king's troops, who immediately charged them as before, as they wheeled half round to the left. They were pursued, for a small distance, by some of the troops that had not engaged in the morning, and it was easy to perceive their disorder was real, and that they were not likely to rally. By this last discharge, Powussen was slightly wounded, and his men were plainly seen hurrying him off the field. In the very instant the rebels turned their backs, Keffa Yafous ordered all the troops, horse and foot, to file off down the narrow road into the valley, behind the heavy-armed horse, who kept their ground before the road, and there to join the king.

For my part, I thought the affair was over, when, last of all, we, too, with our heavy horses, descended the road, where we found Guebra Mascall, (whose activity was above all praise) drawn up on our right along the foot of the bank, (with a large pool of water in his front) flanking the valley, the king drawn up in the narrowest part of it, and just engaged with the troops of Lasta and Pegemder, that had gone round by the junction of the rivers. These had lost, as we afterwards heard, much time in giving their horses water. They were, however, the more refreshed when they did come, and though they had received a fire from the troops on the round hill, and from those posted on the rocky ground, on the other
side

side of the valley, they had beat the king and Engedan back, and wounded him in the thigh.

At this time the Koccob horse, and Yafine with his Moors (who had the charge of the road above till all the troops were gone) arrived, being as it were shut out from the army; who were engaged at the other side of the hill. Kefla Yafous, after descending through the winding road in the valley, ordered Guebra Mascall to pass the pool, and stand at the bottom of the winding road, for fear the enemy should enter at the valley on the king's right, where the river ran, and so cut us off from our camp.

This space he was then occupying when Yafine, first, and afterwards, our black horse, arrived. He had, it seems, cried out to me before from the side of the pool, but I had not then heard him. He now, however, repeated, Where are you going, Yagoube? To die, said I, furlily; it is the business of the day. He then added, Kefla Yafous has crossed over behind Bascha Hezekias, and fallen into the king's rear. You know well, said I, our post is in his front. Then follow me, cried Mascall, for by G—d I say you shall not take one step to-day, but I will go five before you. So saying, he advanced very hastily, and when he saw the Begemder colours retreating before the king, he poured in a volley, which, though at a considerable distance, turned all to a perfect flight.

We entered upon the smoke, just before the Shoa horse, with no loss, and very little resistance,

ance, and came just into the place which we occupied in the morning. Though the flight of the rebels was apparently real, Kefla Yafous would not suffer a pursuit into the plain, but advancing singly before us, began to form immediately; the musquetry were planted on each side of the valley as far up the hill as to be out of reach of the horse, and the rest of the infantry in the plain; Basha Hezekias was on the round hill just behind the center, where the king had placed himself, and Guebra Mascal nearly where he stood before.

The army now made an appearance of a large section of an amphitheatre. I observed the king had pulled off the diadem, or white fillet he wears for distinction, and was very intent upon renewing the engagement: the Begemder troops were forming, with great alertness, about half a mile below, being reinforced from time to time. The king ordered his drums to beat, and his trumpets to sound, to inform the enemy he was ready; but they did not answer, or advance: soon after (it being near three o'clock) the weather became overcast, and cold, on which the troops of Begemder beat a retreat; the king, very soon after, did the same, and returned to the camp without further molestation; only that coming near a rock which projected into the valley, (not far distant from the camp) a multitude of peasants belonging to Mariam-Ohha, threw down a shower of stones from their hands and slings which hurt several. The king ordered them to be fired at, though they

they were at a great distance off, and passed on : but Guebra Mascal commanding about fifty men to run briskly up the hill, on each side of the rock, gave them two discharges at a less distance, which killed or wounded many, and made the rest disappear in a moment.

I doubt that my reader will be more than sufficiently tired with the detail of this second battle of Serbraxos; but, as it was a very remarkable incident in my life, I could not omit it as far as I saw it myself, and suppressing any one part of it would have involved the rest in a confusion, with which I fear it may be still too justly charged. I therefore shall only say for connection's sake, that Gulho and Guebra Christos, in the center, were but partially engaged, and Kasmati Tesfos of Siré, second commander for the king, in that division, wounded, and taken prisoner. Guebra Christos, the king's uncle, was slain, (as it was believed) by a shot of his own men; few other lives of note were lost on either side, in that division. The king's troops fell back under the hill of Serbraxos, where Michael was, and, though followed by Gulho, were no further attacked by him. But on the right, Billetana Gueta Tecla, and Welleta Michael, after a very obstinate and bloody engagement, were beaten by Kasmati Ayabdar, and forced across the river Mogetch, where, having rallied and posted themselves strongly, it was not thought proper to attempt to force them, and they
all

all joined the camp soon after the king, but with very great loss.

This battle, though it was rather a victory than a defeat, had, however, upon the king's affairs, all the bad consequences of the latter, nor was there any thinking man who had confidence in them from that day forward. Near 3000 men perished on the king's side, a great proportion of whom was of the left wing, which he commanded; near 180 young men, of the greatest hopes and noblest families in the kingdom, were among that number; Guebra Christos was in all respects a truly national loss. Kefla Yafous was twice wounded, but not dangerously, besides a multitude of others of the first rank, among whom was Ayto Engedan, who by proper care soon recovered also, but in the mean time was sent to Gondar, to his cousin Ayto Confu. On our side, too, a son of Lika Netcho, and a son of Nebrit Tecla, were both slain.—Providence seemed now to have begun to require satisfaction for the blood of the late king Joas, in the shedding of which these two were particularly concerned. Among the slain were our friends the Baharnagash and his son, who died valiantly fighting before the king at the time he escaped down the bank into the valley.

But what served as comfort to the king, was the still heavier loss sustained by the enemy, who, by their own accounts that day, lost above 9000 men, seven thousand of whom were from the troops of Begemder and Lasta, with which the
king

king was engaged. For my own part, I cannot believe, but that both these accounts are much exaggerated; the great proportion that died of those that were wounded must have greatly swelled the loss of the rebels, because most gun-shot wounds, especially if bones are broken, mortify, and prove mortal. Among the slain, on the part of Begemder, were two chiefs of Lafta, and two relations of Powuffen, (a brother-in-law and his son) they were both shot, bearing the banner of king Theodorus. The unworthy Confu, brother to Guebra Mehedin, and nephew to Iteghé, whom I have often mentioned, had escaped, indeed, from Kasmati Ayabdar, who had given orders to confine him, to die a rebel this day among the troops of Begemder.

The king being washed and dressed, and having dined, received a compliment from Ras Michael, who sent him a present of fruit, and a thousand ounces of gold. There began the filthiest of all ceremonies that ever disgraced any nation styling themselves Christians; a ceremony that cannot be put in terms sufficiently decent for modest ears, without adapting the chaste language of scripture, which, when necessity obliges to treat of gross subjects, always makes choice of the least offensive language.

All those, whether women or men, who have ties of the crown, are obliged to furnish certain numbers of horse and foot. The women were seldom obliged to personal attendance, till Ras Michael

Michael made it a rule, in order to compose a court or company for Ozoro Esther. At the end of a day of battle each chief is obliged to sit at the door of his tent, and each of his followers, who has slain a man, presents himself in his turn, armed as in fight, with the bloody foreskin of the man whom he has slain hanging upon the wrist of his right hand. In this, too, he holds his lance, brandishing it over his master, or mistress, as if he intended to strike; and repeating in a seeming rage, a rant of nonsense, which admits of no variation, "I am John the son of George, the son of William, the son of Thomas; I am the rider upon the brown horse; I saved your father's life at such a battle; where would you have been if I had not fought for you to-day? you give me no encouragement, no cloaths, nor money; you do not deserve such a servant as I;" and with that he throws his bloody spoils upon the ground before his superior. Another comes afterwards, in his turn, and does the same; and, if he has killed more than one man, so many more times he returns, always repeating the same nonsense, with the same gestures. I believe there was a heap of above 400 that day, before Ozoro Esther; and it was monstrous to see the young and beautiful Tecla Mariam sitting upon a stool presiding at so filthy a ceremony; nor was she without surprise, such is the force of custom, that no compliment of that kind was paid on my part; and still more
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so, that I could not be even present at so horrid and bloody an exhibition.

The superiors appear at this time with their heads covered as before their vassals; their mouth, too, is hid, and nothing is seen but their eyes: this does not proceed from modesty, but is a token of superiority, of which, covering or uncovering the head is a very special demonstration. After this ceremony is over each man, takes his bloody conquest, and retires to prepare it in the same manner the Indians do their scalps. To conclude this beastly account, the whole army, on their return to Gondar, on a particular day of review, throws them before the king, and leaves them at the gate of the palace. It is in search of these, and the unburied bodies of criminals, that the hyænas come in such numbers to the streets, where it is dangerous, even when armed, to walk after dark.

This inhuman ceremony being over, also the care of the wounded, which indeed precedes every thing, the king received all those of the nobility who had distinguished themselves that day; the tent was crowded, and he was in great spirits at the slaughter that had been made, which unbecoming pleasure he never could disguise. He mentioned the death of his uncle Guebra Christos with a degree of chearfulness, presuming, that when such a man died on his side, many of that rank and merit must have fallen on the other. Villages, appointments, and promotions, gold, promises,

promises, and presents of every kind, had been liberally bestowed upon those who had presented themselves, and who had merited reward that day by their behaviour. The king had been furnished with means from the Ras, and according to his natural inclination (especially towards soldiers) he had bestowed them liberally, and I believe impartially. Guebra Mascall had not appeared; he was waiting upon his uncle Ras Michael, looking after his own interest, to which no Abyssinian is blind, and exposing those bloody spoils, which I have just mentioned, to the Ras, his uncle and general.

I had been absent from another motive, the attendance on my friend Engedan, to whose tent I had removed my bed, as he complained of great pain in his wound, and I had likewise obtained leave of the Ras to shift my tent near that of his, and leave the care of the king's horse to Laeca Mariam, an old slave and confidential servant of the king.

As these men were the king's menial servants in his palace, a number of them (about a fourth) staid at Gondar with the horses, and a few more than 100 to 120 could now be mustered, from about 200 or 204 which they at first were: the arranging of this, attendance upon Ayto Engedan, and several delays in getting access to the Ras, who had all his troops of Tigrè round him, made it past eight o'clock in the evening before I could see the king after he entered the camp; he had
many

many times sent in search of Sertza Denghel, but no such person could be found; he had been seen bravely fighting by Engedan's side in the entrance of the valley, when that young nobleman was wounded, and he had retired with him from the field, but nobody could give any account of him, and the king, by his repeated inquiries after him, shewed more anxiety, from the supposition he was lost, than he had done for Guebra Christos his uncle, or all the men that had fallen that day; I had seen him in Ayto Engedan's tent, sitting behind his bed, in the darkest place of it; both his lips, nose, and chin were violently cut, his whole fore teeth beat out, and both his cheeks greatly swelled. I had given him what relief I could, nor was there any thing dangerous in his wounds; but the affront of receiving the blow from the king, when he was doing a most meritorious act of duty (the saving him from death, or the hands of the rebels,) had made such an impression upon a noble mind, that as soon as he arrived in Engedan's tent, he had ordered his hair to be cut off, put a white cap, or monks cowl upon his head, and by a vow dedicated himself to a monastic life. In vain the king flattered, rewarded, and threatened him afterwards, and went so far as to make the Abuna menace him with excommunication if he persisted in his resolution any longer. After this I carried him, as we shall see, by the king's desire, to Gusho, in his camp, and interested him also to persuade Sertza Denghel to renounce

renounce his rash vow: no consideration could however prevail, for, like a private monk, he lived at home in the village which belonged to him in patrimony, and, though he often came to court, never slept or ate in the palace, the excuse being, when desired to stay dinner, that he had *no teeth*. He constantly slept at my house, sometimes chearful, but very seldom so. He was a young man of excellent understanding, and particularly turned to the study of religion; he was well read in all the books of his own country, and very desirous of being instructed in ours; he had the very worst opinion of his own priests, and his principal desire (if it had been possible) was to go with me to die, and to be buried in Jerusalem.

C H A P. XXVII.

King rewards his Officers—The Author again persecuted by Guebra Mascal—Great Displeasure of the King—The Author and Guebra Mascal are reconciled and rewarded—Third Battle of Serbraxos.

AFTER the engagement, as every body had access to the king's presence, I did not choose to force my way through the croud, but went round through the more private entry, by the bed-chamber, when I placed myself behind the king's chair. As soon as he saw me, he said, with great benignity, "I have not enquired nor sent for you, because I knew you would be necessarily busied among those of your friends, who have been wounded to-day; you are yourself, besides, hurt: how are you?" I answered, "that I was not hurt to-day, but, though often in danger, had escaped without any other harm than excessive fatigue occasioned by heat and weight of my coat of mail, and that one of my horses was killed under Ammonios."

VOL. IV.

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I then took the red colours from the servant behind me, and going to the carpet spread before the king, laid them at his feet, saying, "So may all your majesty's enemies fall, as this arch rebel (the bearer of this) has fallen to-day;" a great murmur was immediately raised upon seeing these colours, and the king cried out with the utmost impatience, "Has he fallen into your hands, Yagoube? who was he, where did you meet him, or where did you slay him?" "Sir, said I, it was not my fortune to meet him to-day, nor did I slay him. I am no king-killer; it is a sin, I thank God, from which my ancestors are all free; yet, had Providence thrown in my way a king like this, I believe I might have overcome my scruples. He was killed, as I suppose, by a shot of Guebra Mascall, on the flank of our line; a soldier picked up the colours on the field, and brought them to me in hopes of reward, while you was engaged with the troops of Begemder, near the bank; but the merit of his death is with Guebra Mascall. I do him this justice, the rather because he is the only man in your majesty's army who bears me ill-will, or has been my constant enemy, for what reason I know not; but God forbid, that on this, or any personal account, I should not bear witness to the truth: this day, my fortune has been to be near him during the whole of it, and I say it from certain inspection, that to the bravery and activity of Guebra Mascall every man in your left wing owes his life or liberty."—"He is a shame and disgrace

disgrace to his family, says the king's secretary, who was standing by him, if after this he can be your enemy."—"It must be a mistake, says the king's priest (Kiis Hatzè), for this should atone for it, though Yagoube had slain his brother."

While this conversation was going on, an extraordinary bustle was observed in the crowd, and this unquiet genius pushing through it with great violence, his goat's skin upon his shoulders, and covered with dust and sweat, in the same manner he came from the field; he had heard I was gone to the king's tent with the red flag, and not doubting I was to complain of him, or praise myself at his expence, had directly followed me, without giving himself time to make the least inquiry. He threw himself suddenly, with his face to the ground, before the throne, and rising as quickly, and in violent agitation, he said to the king, or rather bellowed, very indecently, "It is a lie Yagoube is telling; he does not say the truth; I meant him no harm but good to-day, and he did not understand my language. I don't say Yagoube is not as good a man as any of us, but it is a lie he has been telling now, and I will prove it."

A general silence followed this wild rhapsody; the king was surprised, and very gravely said, I am sorry, for your sake, if it is a lie; for my part, I was rash enough to believe it was true. Guebra Mascall was still going to make bad worse, by some absurd reply, when the secretary, and one or two of his friends, hauled him out behind

the throne to one of the apartments within, not without some resistance, every one supposing, and many saying, he was drunk; the king was silent, but appeared exceedingly displeased, when I fell upon the ground before him, (a form of asking leave to speak upon any particular subject) and rising said, Sir, With great submission, it is not, I apprehend, true, that Guebra Mascall is drunk, as some have rashly said now in your presence; we have all ate and drank, and changed our cloathing since the battle; but this man, who has been on foot since five in the morning, and engaged all day, has not, I believe, ate or drank as yet; certainly he has not washed himself, or changed his habit, but has been taking care of his wounded men, and has presented himself now as he came from the field, under the unjust suspicion I was doing him wrong. I then repeated what had happened at the bank when the king was pursuing the troops of Begemder. Now I understand him, says the king, but still he is wrong, and this is not the first instance I have seen, when there was no such mistake. At this time a messenger came to call me from within.

The king divined the reason of sending, and said, No, he shall not go to Guebra Mascall; I will not suffer this. Go, says he to one of his servants that stood near him, desire the Ras to call Guebra Mascall, and ask him what this brutality means? I have seen two instances of his misbehaviour already, and wish not to be provoked by

by a third. At this instant came Kefla Yafous, with his left hand bound up, and a broad leaf like that of a plane upon his fore-head. After the usual salutation, and a kind of joke of the king's on his being wounded, I asked him if he would retire and let me dress his forehead? which he shewing inclination to do, the king said, Aye, go, and ask Guebra Mascall why he quarrels with his best friends, and prevents me from rewarding him as he otherwise would have deserved. I went out with Kefla Yafous, being very desirous this affair should not go to the Ras, and we found Guebra Mascall in appearance in extreme agony and despair.

The whole story was told distinctly to Kefla Yafous, who took it up in the most judicious manner. He said he had been detained at his tent, but had come to the king's presence expressly to give Guebra Mascall the just praise he deserved for his behaviour that day: that he was very happy that I, who was near him all the action, and was a stranger, and unprejudiced (as he might be thought not to be) had done it so justly and so handsomely. At the same time he could not help saying, that the quarrel with Yagoube in the palace, the taunting speech made without provocation in the king's presence on the march, his apostrophe in the field, and the abrupt manner in which he ignorantly broke in upon the conversation before the king, interrupting and contradicting his own commendations, shewed a
distem-

distempered mind, and that he acted from a bad motive, which, if inquired into, would inevitably ruin him, both with the King and Ras; and he had heard indeed it already had done with the former.

Guebra Mascall, now crying like a child, condemned himself for a malicious madman in the two first instances: but swore, that on the field he had no intention but to save me, if occasion threw it in his way; for which purpose alone it was he had cried out to me to stand firm, for the troops of Begemder were coming upon us, but that I did not understand his meaning. Guebra Mascall advances nothing but truth, said I, to Kessia Yafous; I did not perfectly understand him to-day in the field, as he spoke in his own language of Tigré, and stammers greatly, nor did I distinctly comprehend what he said across the pool, for the same reason, and the confusion we were in: I shall however most readily confess my obligation to him, for the opportunity he gave me to join the king. I am a stranger, and liable to err, whilst, for the same reason, I am entitled to all your protections and forgiveness. I am, moreover, the king's stranger, and as such, entitled to something more as long as I conduct myself with propriety to every one. I have never spoken a word but in Guebra Mascall's praise, and in this I have done him no more than justice; his impatience perverted what I had said; but the real truth, as I spoke it, remains in the ears of the
king

king and of those that were by-standers, to whom I appeal.

Every thing went after this in the manner that was to be wished. Guebra Mascal and I vowed eternal friendship to each other, of which Kefla Yafous professed himself the guarantee. All this passed while I was binding up his head; he went again to the king. For my own part, tired to death, low in spirits, and cursing the hour that brought me to such a country, I almost regretted I had not died that day in the field of Serbraxos. I went to bed, in Ayto Engedan's tent, refusing to go to Ozoro Esther, who had sent for me. I could not help lamenting how well my apprehensions had been verified, that some of our companions at last night's supper, so anxious for the appearance of morning, should never see its evening. Four of them, all young men, and of great hopes, were then lying dead and mangled on the field; two others besides Engedan had been also wounded. I had, however, a sound and refreshing sleep. I think madness would have been the consequence, if this necessary refreshment had failed me; such was the horror I had conceived of my present situation.

On the 21st, Engedan was conveyed in a litter to Gondar; and early in the morning of that day arrived an officer from Powussen, together with three or four priests. He brought with him twenty or thirty kettle-drums belonging to the king, with their mules, and as many of their drummers

mers as were alive. The errand was sham proposals of peace, as usual, and great professions of allegiance to the king. As Powussen's attack, however, that day, had something very personal in it, and that the story of Theodorus was founded upon a supposition that the king was to be slain on the field of Serbraxos, little answer was returned, only the red flag was sent back with a message, That perhaps, from the good fortune that had attended it, Powussen might wish to keep it for Theodorus his successor, but it was never after seen or heard of.

Gusho likewise, and Ayabdar, sent a kind of embassy to enquire after the king's health and safety; they wished him, in terms of the greatest respect, not to expose himself in the field as he had done in the last battle, or at least, if he chose to command his troops in person, that he should distinguish himself by some horse, or dress, as his predecessors used to do; and they concluded with severe reflections on Michael, as not sufficiently attentive to the safety of his sovereign. Gracious messages were returned to these two, and they all were dismissed with the usual presents of clothes and money.

About eleven o'clock in the forenoon I received an order from the Ras to attend him, and, as I thought it was about the affair of Guebra Mascall, I went very unwillingly. I was confirmed in this by seeing him waiting with many of his friends without the tent, and still more so upon our being called

called in together: the Ras was conversing low to two priests, who by their dress seemed to have come lately from Gondar; he paid little regard to either of us, but nodded, and asked in Tigré how we did? Three or four servants, however, brought out new fine cotton clothes, which they put upon us both; and, upon another nod, several officers and priests, and a number of other people, conducted us to the king, though still, as the Ras had scarcely spoken to us, I wondered how this should end. After staying a little we were both introduced; the Likaontes, or judges, some priests, and my friend the secretary, stood about the king, who sat in the middle of his tent upon the stool Guangoul had sat down upon; the secretary held something in his lap, and, upon Guebra Mascal's first kneeling, bound a white fillet like a ribband round his forehead, upon which were written in black and red ink, *Mo ambassa am Nizelet Solomon am Negadè Jude*, "The lion of the tribe of Judah of the race of Solomon has overcome." The secretary then declared his investiture; the king had given him in fief, or for military service for ever, three large villages in Dembea, which he named, and this was proclaimed afterwards by beat of drum at the door of the tent. The king then likewise presented him with a gold knife, upon which he kissed the ground, and arose.

It was my turn next to kneel before the king. Whether there was any thing particular in my
counte-

countenance, or what fancy came into his head I know not, but when I looked him in the face he could scarce refrain from laughing. He had a large chain of gold, with very maffy links, which he doubled twice, and then put it over my neck, while the secretary said, "Yagoube, the king does you this great honour, not as payment of past services, but as a pledge that he will reward them if you will put it in his power." Upon this I kissed the ground. and we were both reconducted to the Ras, with our insignia; and, having kissed the ground before him, and then his hands, we both had leave to retire. He seemed very busy with people arrived from without; he only lifted up his head, smiled, and said, Well, are you friends now? We both bowed without answer, and left the tent.

The chain consisted of 184 links, each of them weighing 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ dwts of fine gold. It was with the utmost reluctance that, being in want of every thing, I sold great part of this honourable distinction at Sennaar in my return home; the remaining part is still in my possession. It is hoped my successors will never have the same excuse I had, for further diminishing this honourable monument which I have left them.

About a few hours after this, a much more interesting spectacle appeared before the whole camp. Ayto Tesfos, governor of Samen under Jeas, had never laid down his arms, nor paid any allegiance to the present king or his father, but had

had constantly treated them as usurpers, and the Ras as a rebel and parricide. He had continued in friendship with Fasil, but never would co-operate or join with him, not even when he was at Gondar as Ras. He lived in the inaccessible rock, (called the Jews Rock) one of the highest of the mountains of Samen, where he maintained a large number of troops, with which he overawed the whole neighbouring country, and made perpetual inroads into Tigré. Enemy as he was to Ras Michael, he would not venture to take an active part against him, till the king's affairs were plainly going to ruin. I have already mentioned, that the last thing Michael did was to send Keffa Yafous, Bascha Hezekias, and Welleta Michael, to dispossess him of his strong-hold if possible, and in this they had failed. But now that Tesfos saw there was no probability that Michael should be able to retreat to Tigré, he came at last to join Gusho, bringing with him only about a thousand men, having left all his posts guarded against surprise, and strong enough to cut off all recruits arriving from Tigré. Nothing that had yet happened ever had so bad effect upon Michael's men as this appearance of Tesfos. It was a little before mid-day when his army appeared, and from the hills above marched down towards the valley below us, not two musquet-shot from our camp.

Though Samen is really on the west of the Tacazzé, and consequently in the Amharic division of this country, yet, on account of its vicinity
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to Tigré, the language and customs are mostly the same with those of that province. There is a march peculiar to the troops of Tigré, which, when the drums of Tesfos beat at passing, a despondency seemed to fall on all the Tigran soldiers, greater than if ten thousand men of Amhara had joined the rebels. It was a fine day, and the troops, spread abroad upon the face of the hill, not only shewed more in number than they really were, but also more security than they were, in point of prudence, warranted to do, when at so small a distance from such an army as ours.

Tesfos took a post very likely to distress us, as he had more than 300 musquetry with him. He sat down with horse and foot in the middle of the valley before us, with part of his musquetry posted upon the skirts of the mountain Belessen on one side, and part on the top of that long, even hill, dividing the valley from the river Mariam. Over his camp, like a citadel, is the rock that projects into the valley, from which the peasants of Mariam-Ohha had thrown the stones when we were returning to our camp after the battle. Upon this rock Tesfos had placed a multitude of women and servants, who began to build straw-huts for themselves, as if they intended to stay there for some time, though there was still plenty of the female sex below with the camp. Indeed, I never remember to have seen so many women in proportion to any army whatever, no not even in our own.

If

If Tesfos had been long in coming, he was resolved, now he was come, to make up for his lost time, as he was not a mile and a half from our camp, and could see our horses go down to water, either at Deg-Ohhaor Mariam; that same day at two o'clock, his horse attacked our men, at watering, killed some servants, and took several horses. This behaviour of Tesfos was taken as a defiance to Kefla Yafous in particular, and to the army in general.

There was no person in the whole army, of any rank whatever, so generally beloved as Kefla Yafous; he was looked upon by the soldiers as their father. He was named by the Ras to the government of Samen, but had failed, as we have already stated, in dispossessing Ayto Tesfos, whose disorderly march at broad mid-day, so near our army, the ostentatious beating of the Tigran march upon his kettle-drum as he passed, and his taking post so near, were all considered as meriting chastisement. That general, however, though very sensible of this bravado, did not venture to suggest any thing in the present situation of the army, but all his friends proposed it to him, that some reproof should be given to Tesfos, if it was only to raise the drooping spirits of the troops of Tigré. Accordingly 400 horse, and about 500 foot, armed with lances and shields only, without musquetry for fear of alarm, were ordered to be ready as soon as it was perfectly dark, that is, between seven and eight o'clock.

Tesfos

Tesfos having waited the coming of his baggage, and arranged his little camp to his liking, was seen to mount with about 300 horse, to go to the camp of Gulho or Powuffen a little before sun-set, at which time Kefla Yafous was distributing plenty of meat to the soldiers. About eight o'clock they descended the hill unperceived even by part of our camp. Kefla Yafous was governor of Temben (a province on the S. W. of Tigré) immediately joining to Samen, and the language and dialect was the same. The foot were ordered to take the lead, scattered in a manner not to give alarm, and the horse were to pass by the back of the low, even hill, in the other valley, along the banks of the river Mariam, close to the water, in order to cut off the retreat to the plain. A great part of the Samen soldiers were asleep, whilst a number of the mules that had been loaded were straggling up and down, and some of them returning to the camp. The Temben troops had now insinuated themselves among the tents, especially on the side of the hill.

The first circumstance that gave alarm was the appearance of the horse, but they were not taken for an enemy, but for Ayto Tesfos returning. Kefla Yafous now gave the signal to charge, by beating a kettle-drum, and every soldier fell upon the enemy nearest him. It is impossible to describe the confusion that followed, nor was it easy to distinguish enemies from friends, especially for us on horseback; only those that fled were

reckoned enemies. The greatest execution done by the horse was breaking the jars of honey, butter, beer, wine, and flour, and gathering as many mules together as possible to drive them away. Few of the enemy came our way towards the plain, but most fled up the hill : in an instant the straw huts upon the rock were set on fire, and Kessa Yafous had ordered rather to destroy the provisions than the men, since there was no resistance. I passed a large tent, which I judged to be that of Ayto Tesfos, which our people immediately cut open ; but instead of an officer of consequence, we saw, by the light of a lamp, three or four naked men and women, totally overpowered with drink and sleep, lying helpless, like so many hogs, upon the ground, utterly unconscious of what was passing about them. Upon a large tin platter, on a bench, lay one of the large horns, perfectly drained of the spirits that it had contained ; it was one of the most beautiful, for shape and colour, I ever had seen, though not one of the largest. This horn was all my booty that night. Upon my return to Britain, it was asked of me by Sir Thomas Dundas of Carse, to serve for a bugle-horn to the Fauconberg regiment, to which, as being *partum sanguine*, it was very properly adapted. That regiment being disbanded soon after, I know not what further came of it ; it is probably placed in some public collection, or at least ought to be.

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The fire increafing on the hill, and feveral musquets having been heard, it was plain the enemy, in all the camps, were alarmed, and our further stay became every moment more dangerous. Keffa Yafous now beat a retreat, and sent the horsemen all round to force the foot to make the best of their way back, ordering also all mules taken to be ham-stringed and left, not to retard our return. Trumpets and drums were heard from our camp to warn us not to stay, as it was not doubted but mischief would follow, and accordingly we were scarce arrived within the limits of our camp when we heard the found of horse in the valley.

Michael, always watchful upon every accident, no sooner saw the fires lighted on the hill, than he ordered Guebra Mafcal to place a good body of musqueteers about half way down the hill, as near as possible to the ford of Mariam, thinking it probable that the enemy would enter at both ends of the long hill, in order to surround those who were destroying their camp, which they accordingly did, whilst those of our people, who had taken to drinking, fell into the hands of the troops that came by the lower road, and were all put to death. Those that reached the upper ford served to afford us a severe revenge, for Guebra Mafcal, after having seen them pass between him and the river, though it was a dark and very windy night, guessed very luckily their position, and gave them so happy a fire, that most of those who were not slain returned back without seeing

Ayto

Ayto Tesfos's camp, being afraid that some other trap might still be in their way.

In the morning of the 22d, we found that the slain were men of Begemder and Lasta. Tesfos, it seems, had been in Powuffen's camp when he saw the fire lighted on the hill, and thence had provided an additional number of troops to attack Kefla Yafous before he had done his business, but in this he miscarried. Tesfos's party was thus totally destroyed and dispersed, his mules slaughtered, and his provisions spoiled. About thirty of Kefla Yafous's infantry, however, lost their lives by staying behind, and intoxicating themselves with liquor. Of the horse, not a man was either killed or wounded. I was the only unfortunate person; and Providence had seemed to warn me of my danger the day before, for passing then that rock which projected into the valley, the fire giving perfect light, the multitude assembled above, and prepared for that purpose, poured down upon us such a shower of arrows, stones, billets of wood, and broken jars, as is not to be imagined. Of these a stone gave me a very violent blow upon my left arm, while a small fragment of the bottom of a jar, or pitcher, struck me on the crest of my helmet, and occasioned such a concussion as to deprive me for a time of all recollection, so that, when lying in my tent at no great distance, I did not remember to have heard Guebra Mascas's discharge. I certainly had some presaging that mischief was to happen to me, for passing that

rock, just before we entered Tesfos's camp, I desired Tecla, when I returned, to allow fifty men to proceed up the hill and cut those people in pieces who had stationed themselves so inconveniently ; but he would not consent, being desirous to return without loss of time, and before the enemy knew the calamity that had befallen them.

Ayto Tesfos now became a little more humble, retreated to the south end of the long hill, till being joined, next day the 23^d, by his neighbours, Samuel Mammo of Tzegadé, and Heraclius of Walkayt, who had a very large force, he again removed nearer us, about half a mile farther than his first position, and extended his camp quite across the valley, from the foot of the hill to the river Mariam, keeping his head-quarters on the top of the long even hill, so often mentioned. Mammo and Heraclius had passed by Gondar, and, being much superior in number, had taken Sanuda, Ayto Confu, and Ayto Engedan prisoners, and, though the two last were wounded, carried them to Gulsho's camp.

I need not trouble the reader with the attention shewed me upon my accident ; all that was great and noble at court, from the king downwards, seemed to be as sensible of it as if it had happened to one of their own family ; the Ras very particularly so ; and I must own, above all, Guebra Mascal shewed himself a sincere convert, by a concern and friendship that had every mark of sincerity. Ozoro Fsther was several times the next day at

my tent, and with her the beautiful Tecla Mariam, whose sympathy and kindness would more than have compensated a greater misfortune; for, saving that it had occasioned an inflammation in my eyes, the hurt was of the slightest kind.

Many people came to-day from the several camps with proposals of peace, which ended in nothing, though it was visible enough to every one that a treaty of some kind was not only on foot, but already far advanced. In the evening a party of 400 foot and 50 horse, which went to Dembea to forage for the king, was surprised by Coque Abou Barea, and cut to pieces; after which that general encamped with Gussho, and brought with him about 3000 men.

Provisions were now become scarce in the camp, and there was a prospect that they would be every day scarcer; and, what was still worse, Deg-Ohha, which long had stood in pools, was now almost dry, and, from the frequent use made of it by the number of beasts, began to have both an offensive smell and taste; whilst, every time we attempted to water at the Mariam river, a battle was to be fought with Tesfos's horse in the valley. On the other hand, an epidemical fever raged in the rebels camp on the plain, especially in that of Gussho and Ayabdar. The rain, moreover, was now coming on daily, and something decisive became necessary for all parties.

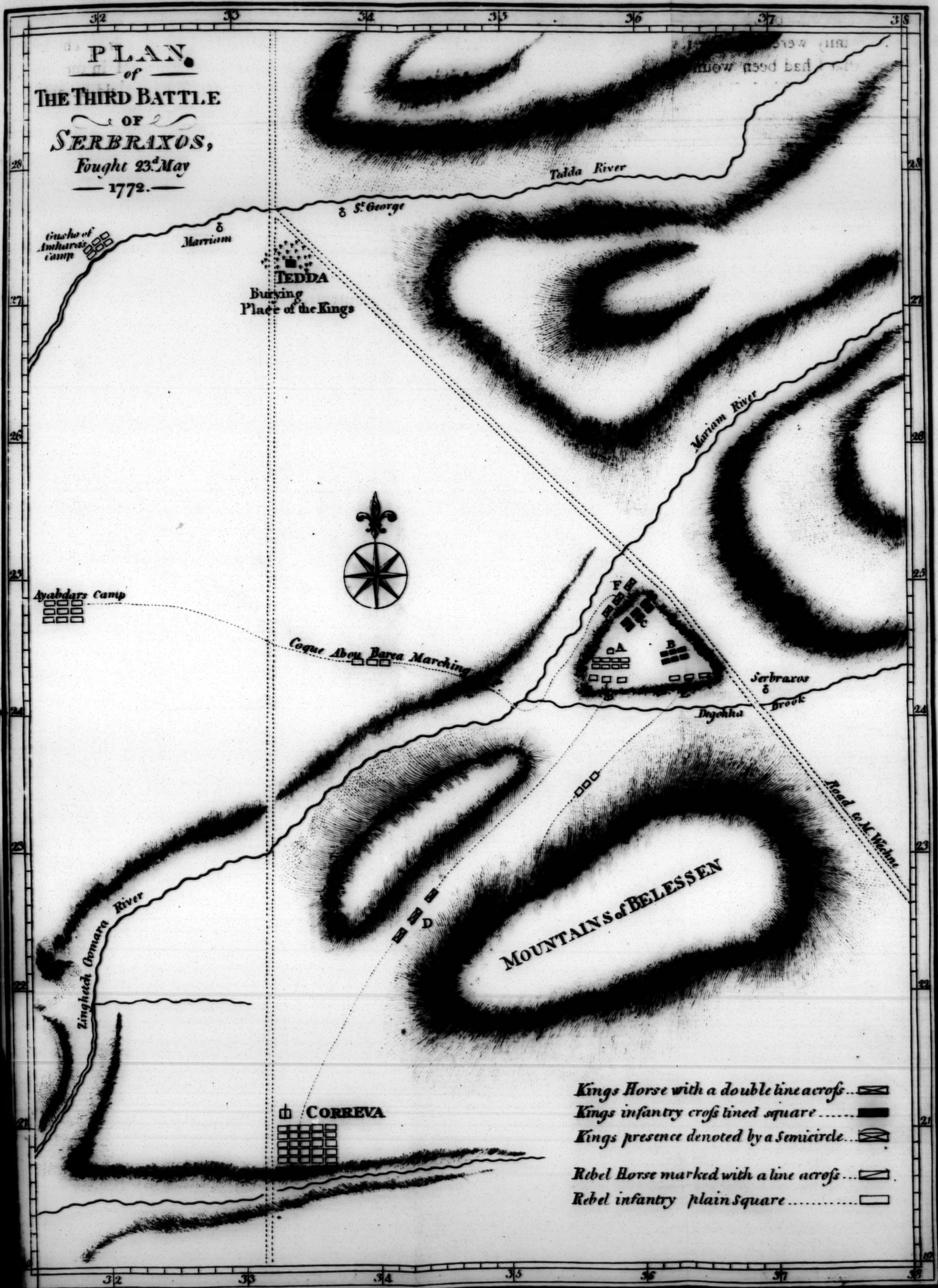
On the 24th, in the morning, a message arrived from Gussho to the king, desiring I might have

liberty to come and bring medicines with me, for his whole family were ill of the fever. The king answered, that I had been wounded in the head, and was ill; nor did he believe I could be able to come; but, if I was, he should send me in the morning.

A little before noon the drums in the plain beat to arms. Heraclius, Mammo, and Tesfos on the side of the valley, Coque Abou Barea and Afahel Woodage on the side of the plain, with fresh troops, had obtained leave from Gusho and Powussen to try to storm our camp, without any assistance from the main army, in order to bring the whole to a speedy conclusion. There had been a time when such an undertaking would not have been thought a prudent one to much better men than any of those who now were parties in it; but our spirits were greatly fallen, our number, too, much decreased; above all, a relaxation of discipline (and desertion, the consequence of it) began to prevail among us to an alarming degree. This was generally said to be owing to the despondency of the Tigré troops upon the arrival of Tesfos; but it required little penetration to discern, that all sorts of men were weary of constant fighting and hardships, for no other end but unjustly maintaining Michael in a post in which he governed at discretion, to the terror of the whole kingdom, and ruin of the constitution.

The hill of Serbraxos, when we first took post on it, was rugged and uneven, full of acacia and
other

PLAN
of
THE THIRD BATTLE
OF
SERBRAXOS,
Fought 23^d May
— 1772. —



- Kings Horse with a double line across...
- Kings infantry cross lined square...
- Kings presence denoted by a semicircle...
- Rebel Horse marked with a line across...
- Rebel infantry plain square...

other ill-thriving trees, and various stumps of these had been broken by the wind, or undermined by the torrents. The great need the soldiers had of fuel to roast the miserable pittance of barley, (which was all their food) had cleared away these incumbrances from the side of the hill, and the constant resort of men going up and down, had rendered the surface perfectly smooth and slippery; so that our camp did not appear as placed so high, nor nearly so inaccessible as it was at first. For this reason, Ras Michael had ordered the soldiers to gather all the stones on the hill, and range them in small walls, at proper places, in a kind of zig-zag, under which the soldiers lay concealed, and with their fire-arms protected the mules which went down to drink. Michael had lined all these little fortifications with musquetry, from the bottom of the hill to the door of his tent and the king's.

About noon the hill was assaulted on all sides that were accessible, and the ancient spirit of the troops seemed to revive upon seeing the enemy were the aggressors. Without any aid of musquetry, the king's foot repulsed Coque Abou Barea, and drove him from the hill into the plain, without any considerable stand on his part: the same success followed against Mammo and Heraclius; they were chased down the hill, and several of their men pursued and slain on the plain; but a large reinforcement coming from the camp, the king's troops were driven up the hill again,
and

and Tesfos, with his musquetry, had made a lodgment in a pit on the low side of one of these stone-walls Ras Michael had built for his own defence, from which he fired with great effect, and the king's troops were obliged to fall back to the brow of the hill immediately below the tent, and that of the Ras's. In a moment appeared Woodage Afahel, with a large body of horse, supported likewise with a considerable number of foot. This was the most accessible part of the hill, and under the cover of Tesfos's continued fire: they mounted it with great gallantry, the troops above expecting them with their irons fixed at a proper elevation in the ground; for it must be here explained, that no Abyssinian soldier in battle rests his gun upon his hand, as every one is provided with a stick about four feet long, which hath hooks, or rests, on alternate intervals on each side, and which he sticks in the ground before him, and rests the muzzle of his gun upon it, according to the height of the object he is to aim at; and here is discovered the fatal and most unreasonable effect of fear in those troops, who have not the knowledge or practice of fire-arms, and are about to charge, for as soon as they hear this noise of setting the sticks, (which is somewhat louder than that of our men cocking their musquets) they halt immediately, and give the fairest opportunity to their enemies to take aim; and, after thus suffering from a well-directed fire, they fall into confusion, and run, leaving the musquetry time to re charge.

re-charge. This is as if they voluntarily devoted themselves to destruction; for if, either upon hearing the noise of setting the sticks in the ground, or before or after they have received the fire, the horse were to charge these musqueteers, having no bayonets, at the gallop, they must be cut to pieces every time they were attacked by cavalry; the contrary of which is always the case.

Woodage Afahel had now advanced within about thirty yards of the musquetry that were expecting him, when unluckily the hill became more steep, and Ayto Tesfos (for some reason not then known) ceased firing. The king was now close to the very brow of the hill, nor could any one persuade him to keep at a greater distance. I was not far from him, and had no sort of doubt but that I should presently see the whole body of the enemy destroyed by the fire awaiting them, and blown into the air. Woodage Afahel was very conspicuous by a red fillet, or bandage, wrapt about his head, the two ends hanging over his ears, whilst he was waving with his hands for the troops below to follow briskly, and support those near him, who were impeded by the roughness and mossy quality of the ground. At this instant the king's troops fired, and I expected to see the enemy strewn dead along the face of the hill. Indeed we saw them speedily disappear, but like living men, riding and running down the declivity so as even to excite laughter. Woodage Afahel, with two men only, bravely gained the top of the mountain, and, as he passed the king's tent, pulled

pulled off his red fillet, making a sign as of saluting it, and then galloped through the middle of the camp. He was now descending unhurt upon the left, where Abou Barea had been engaged and beaten, when Sebastos, a Greek, the king's cook, seventy-five years of age, of whom I have already spoken in the campaign of Maitsha, lying behind a stone, with his gun in his hand, seeing the troops engage below, fired at him as he passed: the ball took place in the left side of his belly. He was seen stooping forward upon the tore of his saddle, with some men supporting him on each side, in his way to his tent, where he died in the evening, having, by his behaviour that day, deserved a better fate. Sebastos reported this feat of his to the king, but it was not believed, till a confirmation of the fact came in the evening, when Sebastos was cloathed, and received a reward from the king.

Tesfos had been observed not to fire since Woodage Afahel gained the steep part of the hill, and it was thought it was from fear of galling his friends; but it was soon known to be owing to another cause. Kefla Yafous had ordered two of his nephews to take a body of troops, with lances and shields only, and these were to go round the Ras's tent, and down the side of the hill, till they were even with Tesfos behind the screen where he lay. These two young men, proud of the sole command which they had then received for the first time, executed it with great alacrity; and though they
were

were ordered by their uncle to watch the time when Tesfos had fired, and then to run in upon him, they disdained that precaution, but coming speedily upon him, part of them threw down the stones under which he was concealed, and part attacked him in the hollow, and, while much intent upon the success of Woodage and Afahel, he was in a moment overpowered and dislodged; and, being twice wounded, with great difficulty he escaped. Seventeen of his match-locks were brought into the camp, and with them a man of great family in Samen, a relation or friend of Keffa Yafous. This person, after having been regaled with the best that was in the camp, and cloathed anew after their custom, was sent back the^e same night to Ayto Tesfos, with a short message, "Tesfos had better be upon his rock again, if my boys can beat him upon the plain at broad noon-day."

Coque Abou Barea, after having attempted several times to ascend the hill, was beaten back as often, and obliged to desist. On the king's side only eleven men were killed. The loss of the enemy was variously reported. Sixty-three men only, and several horses of those with Woodage Afahel, were left upon the side of the hill, after the fire of near 1000 musquets—so contemptible is the most dangerous weapon in an ignorant and timid hand. That night the body of musqueteers called Lafta, part of the king's household, (in number about 300 men) deserted in a body. One of the worst consequences of that day's engagement

ment was, that the enemy, when in possession of the foot of the hill, had thrown a great number of dead bodies, both of men and beasts, into Deg-Ohha, which therefore now was abandoned altogether by our troops. To make up for this, Ras Michael, that very evening, advanced 2000 men upon the end of the long hill, immediately below him, which post was never molested after, so that our beasts had water in greater plenty and safety than when they were at a less considerable distance.

Below the north-west side of the hill, where it was a steep precipice, two or three pools of water were found retaining all their original purity, out of the reach or knowledge of the enemy, in the bed of the torrent which surrounded the north side of the mountain : the descent was very difficult for beasts, but thither I went several times on foot, and bathed myself, especially my head, in very cold water, which greatly strengthened my eyes, much weakened from the blow I had received.

C H A P. XXVIII.

Interview with Gusbo in his Tent—Conversation and interesting Intelligence there—Return to the Camp—King's Army returns to Gondar—Great Confusion in that Night's March.

ON the 25th of May, early in the morning, I went to Gusbo. When I arrived near his tent I dismounted my mule, and, as the king had commanded me, bared myself to below the breasts, the sign of being bearer of the king's orders. Four men were now sent from the tent, who, two and two, supported each arm, and introduced me in this state immediately to Gusbo. He was sitting on a kind of bed, covered with scarlet cloth, and edged with a deep gold fringe. As soon as I came near him, I began, "Hear what the king says to you." In a moment he rose, and, stripping himself bare to the waist, he bowed with his forehead on the scarlet cloth, but did not, as was his duty, stand on the ground, and touch it with his forehead,

head, though there was a good Persian carpet, as pride and newly-acquired independence had released him from those forms, in the observance of which he had been brought up from his childhood.

On seeing him attentive, I continued, "The king sends you word by me, and I declare to you from my own skill as a physician, that the fever now amongst you will soon become mortal; as the rains increase, you will die; consequently, being out of your allegiance, God only knows what will happen to you afterwards. The king therefore wishes you to preserve your health, by going home to Amhara, taking Powuffen, and all the rest along with you who are ill likewise, and the sooner the better, as he heartily wishes to be rid of you all at once, without your leaving any of your friends behind you." It was with difficulty I kept my gravity in the course of my harangue; it did not seem to be less so on his part, as at the end he broke out in a great fit of laughter. "Aye, aye, Yagoube, says he, I see you are still the old man; but tell the king from me, that if I were to do what you just now desire of me, it was then I should be afraid to die, it was then I should be out of my duty; assure the king, continued Gusho, I will do him better service. Were I to go home and leave Michael with him, I, who am no physician, declare, the Ras would prove in the end a much more dangerous disease to him than all the fevers in Dembea."

I then

I then introduced his relation, Sertza Denghel who stood with the people behind; and, as he had on his monk's dress, Gussho at first did not know him. He had been well informed, however, of his having saved the king, and of the blow that he had received from him. He said every thing in commendation of the young man, and his honourable action, adding, that the preservation of kings was a gift of Providence particularly reserved for the people of Amhara. He then ordered new cloaths to be brought and put upon Sertza Denghel, who scrupled to take off his cowl; on which Gussho violently tore it from his head, dashed it on the floor, stamped twice on it with his foot, and then threw it behind the back of the sofa. At parting, Gussho ordered him five ounces of gold, a large present for one that loved money as Gussho did, commanding him strictly to return to his duty and profession, and ordering me to carry him to the king, and see him reinstated in his office in the palace.

I then desired his permission to visit the sick, and left ipecacuanha and bark with Antonio, (his Greek servant,) and directions how to administer them. One of his nephews, (Ayto Adereffon) the young man who had lost Gussho's horse, had the small-pox, upon which I warned Gussho seriously of the danger to which he exposed all his army if that disease broke out amongst them, and advised him to send his nephew forthwith to the church

church of Mariam, under the care of the priests, which he did accordingly.

The tent being cleared, he asked me if I had seen Welleta Selassé; if I was with her when she died; and who was said to have poisoned her, Ras Michael or herself, or if I had ever heard that it was Ozoro Esther? I told him her friends had sent for me from the camp, but missed me, not knowing I was at Koscam with Ayto Confu, who had been wounded; but that I could have been of little service to her if they had found me sooner: That she had scarce any signs of life when I entered her room, and died soon after: That she confessed she had taken arsenic herself, and named a black servant of hers, a Mahometan, from whom she had bought it; and the reason was, her fears that her grandfather, Ras Michael, whom she had always looked upon as the murderer of her father, should force her when he returned to Gondar. He seemed exceedingly attentive to all I said, and mused for a couple of minutes after I had done speaking.

A plentiful breakfast was then brought us, and many of his officers sat down to it. I observed likewise some people of Gondar, who had formerly fled to Fasil at Michael's first coming. He said he wished me to bleed him before I went away, which I assured him I would by no means do, for if he was well, as I then saw he was, the unnecessary bleeding him might occasion sickness; and, if he was dangerously ill, he might die,
when

when the blame would be laid upon me, and expose me to mischief afterwards. "No, says he, I could certainly trust you, nor would any of my people believe any harm of you; but I am glad to see you so prudent, and that you have a care of my life, for the reason I shall give you afterwards." I bowed, and he made me then tell him all that passed in my visit to Fafil, which I did, without concealing any circumstance. All the company laughed, and he more than any, only saying, "Fafil, Fafil, thou wast born a Galla, and a Galla thou shalt die."

Breakfast being over, the tent was cleared, and we were again left alone, when he put on a very serious countenance. "You know, says he, you are my old acquaintance. I saw you with Michael after the battle of Fagitta, as also the presents you brought, and heard the letters read, both those that came from Metical Aga, and those of Ali Bey from Cairo. All the Greeks here who have considerable posts, and are proud and vain enough, have yet declared to us several times, (as Antonio my servant did to me last night) that, in their own country, the best of them are not higher in rank than your servants; and that those who hitherto have come into this country were no better. We know then, and the king is sensible, that in your own country you are equal to the best of us, and perhaps superior, and as such, even in these bad times, you have been treated. Now, this being the case, you are wrong to expose your-
self

self like a common soldier. We all know, and have seen, that you are a better horseman, and shoot better than we; your gun carries farther, because you use leaden bullets; so far is well; but then you should manage this so as never to act alone, or from any thing that can have the appearance of a private motive*." "Sir, said I, you know that when I first came recommended, as you say, into this country, Ayto Aylo, the most peaceable, as well as the wisest man in it, the Ras, and I believe yourself, but certainly many able and considerable men who were so good as to patronize me, did then advise the putting me into the king's service and household, as the only means of keeping me from robbery and insult. You said that I could not be safe one instant after the king left Gondar, being a single man, who was supposed to have brought money with him; that therefore I must connect myself with young noblemen, officers of consequence about court, whose authority and friendship would keep ill-disposed people in awe. The king observing in me a facility of managing my horse and arms, with which, until that time, he had been unacquainted, placed me about his person, both in the palace and in the field, for his own amusement, and I may say instruction, and for my safety; and this advice has proved so good, that I have never once deviated from it but my life has

* He meant, from the instigation of Ozoro Esther.

been

been in danger. The first attempt I made to go to the cataract, Guebra Mehedin way-laid and intended to murder me. When the king was in Tigré, Woodage Afahel designed to do me the same favour by the Galla he sent from Samseen; and so did Coque Abou Barea at Degwassa, by the hands of Welleta Selaffè. No safety, therefore, then remained to me but in adhering closely to the king, as I have ever since done, and was advised from the first to do, which indispensably brought me to Serbraxos, or wherever he was in person. You cannot think it is from a motive of choice that a white man like myself runs the risk of losing his life, or limbs, so far from home, and where there is so little medical assistance, in a war where he has no motive that can concern him."

"Do not mistake me, Yagoube, says Gussho, your behaviour at Serbraxos does you honour, and will never make you an enemy, so does the like affair with Kessa Yafous; there is no man you can so properly connect yourself with as Kessa Yafous; all I wanted to observe to you is, that it is said Woodage Afahel would have escaped safely from the mountain if you had not shot him, and that yours was the only musquet that was fired at him; which is thought invidious in you, being a stranger, as he is the head of the Edjow Galla, the late king's guards; they may yet return to Gondar, and will look upon you as their enemy, because a leaden bullet was found in Woodage

Afahel's body fired at him by you."—"Sir, said I, it is very seldom a man in such a case as this can have the power of vindicating himself to conviction, but that I now happily can do. All the Greeks in the king's army, their sons and families, all Mahometans, who have been in Arabia, India, or Egypt, use leaden bullets. The man who shot Woodage Afahel is well known to you. He is the king's old cook, Sebastos, a man past seventy, who could not be able to kill a sheep till somebody first tied its legs. He himself informed the king of what he had done, and brought witnesses in the usual form, claiming a reward for his action, which he obtained. It was said that I, too, killed the man who carried the red flag of Theodorus at Serbraxos, though no leaden bullet, I believe, was found in him. A soldier picked up this flag upon the field, and brought it to me. I paid him, indeed, for his pains; and, when I presented the flag to the king, told him what I had seen, that the bearer of it had fallen by a shot from Guebra Mascal. I had not a gun in my hand all that day at Serbraxos, nor all that other day when Woodage Afahel was slain. I saw him pass within less than ten yards where I was standing behind the king, in great health and spirits, with two other attendants; but, so far from firing at him, I was very anxious in my own mind that he should get as safely out of the camp as he had gallantly, though imprudently, forced himself into it. It is not a custom known in my country for
officers

officers to be employed to pick out distinguished men at such advantage, nor would it be considered there as much better than murder: certainly no honour would accrue from it. But when means are necessary to keep officers of the enemy at a proper distance, from consequences that might otherwise follow, there are common soldiers chosen for that purpose, and for which they are not the more esteemed. This, however, I will confess to you, that when either the king's horses or mine went down to Deg-Ohha to water, and never but then, I sat upon the rock above, and did all in my power to protect them, and the men who were with them, and to terrify the enemy who came to molest them, by shewing the extensive range of our rifle guns; and that very day when Ayto Tesfos arrived, some of his troops having driven off the mules, among which were two of mine, I did, I confess, with my own hand shoot four of them from the rock, and at last obliged the rest to keep at a greater distance; but as for Woodage Afahel, I disown having had arms in my hand the day he entered the camp, or having been absent, till late in the evening, from the king's person."

Now, all this is very well, continued Gusho; who killed Theodorus, or the man at Serbraxos; who killed Ayto Tesfos's men, is no object of inquiry; Deg-Ohha was within the line of the king's camp, and they that wanted to deprive him of this possession, or the use of it, did it at their

peril. If you had shot Ayto Tesfos himself, attempting to deprive you of water for the camp, no man in all Amhara would have said you did wrong; but I am very much pleased with what you tell me of Woodage Afahel. The short, yellow man, who breakfasted with you, was one of those two who accompanied Woodage Afahel when he was shot, and is a friend of mine; he brought word that he was killed by a Frank, and the leaden bullet fixed it upon you."

This man was now immediately called for. He went by the nickname of *Goul*, or the *Giant*, from his small size and debility of body. "Is this your man, says Gushe, who shot Woodage Afahel on the hill?" "O, by no means, says Goul; he was an old man with a long grey beard, and a white cloth round his head. This man I know well. I saw him with Fasil. This is Yagoube, the king's friend; he would not do such a thing," "No, certainly he would not, says Gushe, and so mind that you tell Woodage Afahel's friends." Upon this he withdrew. And now, says Gushe, talk no more upon this affair, I will take the rest upon myself. There is a servant of Metical Aga's now in the camp, sent over by desire of your friends and countrymen* at Jidda, to know if you are alive and well. He has also a message to the king, and perhaps I may send him to the camp to-morrow, but more probably

* Captain Thomas Price of the Lyon of Bombay.

defer it till we meet at Gondar. Mean time, remember my injunction to you, to keep close by the person of the king, and then no accident can befall you in the confusion that will soon happen. I thanked him for his friendly advice, which I promised to follow. I then asked for Ayto Confu and Engedan, as also for Metical Aga's servant, but he answered, I could not then see them.

He had now in his hand some silk paper, in which they generally wrap their ingots of gold, and he was preparing to slip this into my hand at parting, in the same manner we do the fee of a physician in Europe. "You forget, said I, what you mentioned in the morning, that I am no cast-away, no Greek nor Armenian servant, but perhaps of equal rank to yourselves: if I wanted money, Metical Aga's servant would procure it for me upon demand. It is your wife and two daughters who are ill; and when you shall hereafter be great, and governing every thing at Gondar, I will by them put you in mind of any piece of friendship I may stand in need of at your hand; and you shall grant it."—"You are a good prophet, Yagoube, says he; and so I shall; but remember my advice; I know you are a friend of Ozoro Esther, but she cannot protect you; Ozoro Altafh* may: the best of all is to keep close to the king, to defend yourself if any body mo-

* Her daughter was married to Powuffen.

lests you on your way to Gondar, and leave the rest to me.

An officer was now appointed to conduct me across the plain, and several servants laden with fish and fruit. About a hundred yards from the tent, a man muffled up met me, whom I found to be a servant of Engedan. "Your army will disband, says he to me, in a low tone of voice; keep by the king, or Aylo my master's brother, and he will bring you over here." Having left him, we continued across the plain, and saw several small parties of horse patrolling, but they came not near us. My conductor said they were Galla, waiting for some opportunity to do mischief. He told me that Ozoro Welleta Israel, and his son Aylo, had joined their army that day with 10,000 men from Gojam, to no purpose at all, continued he, but that of eating up the country. But your friend the Iteghé could not see Ras Michael fall without giving him a shove, though she has staid till the very last day before she ventured, for fear of accidents. Gusso's men set the fish down at the advanced guard, and returned with the officer who had attended me, while I went towards the king's tent, musing what all this might mean, what power was to carry us to Gondar, disband the army, depose Michael, and not hurt the king.

I found the king had not been well, and had taken warm water to vomit, a remedy I advised him sometimes to make use of, not choosing to venture

venture on all occasions to give him medicines, and he was then quiet. I therefore went to Ras Michael, who was alone, and seemingly much chagrined. He interrogated me strictly as to what passed between me and Gusho. I told him the discourse about Woodage Asahel's death, and about Fasil; then about the sick family I had seen, the offer of money, the fish, &c. The same I repeated when I went back to the king, but nothing about our meeting at Gondar. I begged, however, as he still complained a little of his head, that he would see nobody that night, but lie down and compose himself, allowing me to wait in the secretary's apartment till he should awake. I thought he embraced this proposal willingly, Ozoro Esther having had a long conference with him the night before. I do not imagine the state of the realm had much share in their conversation. After he was laid down, I went and found Azage Kyrillos, and with him the beautiful daughter of Tecla Mariam, who was just dressed to go to Ozoro Esther's. She said she would either take me along with her to Ozoro Esther's, or stay, and the king would send us supper at her father's. I excused myself from either, on account of the king's indisposition, and my business with her father, who, guessing by my countenance I had something material to communicate, sent her on her visit, and so we were left alone.

As he was a man with whom I had always lived in the most confidential friendship, and knew the same subsisted between him and the king, I made

no

no scruple to tell him, word for word, what I had heard from Gulsho, and Engedan's servant. He said, without any seeming surprise, Why, we are all worn out, but state all this to the king. Soon after came in the slave who had the charge of the king's bed-chamber, and told the secretary that the king found himself well, only wanted to know what he should drink. I ordered him some water, with some ripe tamarinds, a liquor he usually took in time of Lent. See him and advise him yourself, says the secretary. I accordingly went in, and told the king the whole story. He seemed to be in great agitation, repeating frequently, "O God! O God! O Guebra Menfus Kedus*!"—"Who is this Guebra Menfus Kedus?" said I afterwards to Tecla Mariam, who in his heart believed in him no more than I did. "Why, answered he gravely, he is a great saint, who never ate or drank from his mother's womb till his death, said mass at Jerusalem every day, and came home at night in form of a stork."—"But a bad regimen his, said I, for such violent exercise."—"That is not all, says Tecla Mariam, he fought with the devil once in Tigré, and threw him over the rock Amba Salam, and killed him."—"I wish you joy, said I, this is good news indeed." All this conversation had passed in half a whisper. The king was quiet; but, hearing me say the last words, he started, and cried, "What

* Servant of the Holy Ghost.

joy,

joy, what good news, Yagoube?"—"Why, said I, Sir, it is only Tecla Mariam informing me that the devil is dead, which is good news, at least to me, who always dreaded falling into his clutches."—"Aye, says the king, the monks say so; it must have been long ago; but the saint was surely a holy man."

Though the king was violently agitated, yet he neither said that he did or did not understand what was meant by Gusho and Engedan, but only ordered me home immediately, saying, "As you value your life, open not your mouth to man or woman, nor seem to take particular care about any thing, more than you did before; trust all in the hands of the Virgin Mary, and Guebra Menfus Kedus."

I needed no incitement to go to my tent, where I went immediately to bed. I cannot say but I had a ray of hope that Providence had begun the means which were to extricate me out of the difficulties of my present situation, better and sooner than I had before imagined; I therefore fell soon into a profound sleep, satisfied that I should be quickly called if any thing ailed the king. The lights were now all put out, and, except the cry of the guards going their rounds, very little noise in the camp, considering the vast number of people it contained. I was in a profound sleep when Francisco, a Greek servant of the Ras, a brave and veteran foldier, but given a little to drink, came bawling into my tent, "It is madness to
sleep

sleep at this time.”—“ I am sure, said I, very calmly, I should be mad if I was not to sleep. Why, when would you have me to take my rest? and what is the matter?”—“ Get up, cries he, quickly, for we shall all be cut to pieces in a minute.”—“ Then hang me, said I, if I don’t lie still, for if I have no longer to live, it is not worth while to dress.”—“ Fafil (continued he) has surprised the camp, and gives no quarter.”—“ Fafil! said I, impossible: but go to the guard commanded by Laeca Mariam, and if he has a horse ready saddled bring him to me.”

On this Francisco caught up a lance and shield that were in my tent, for fear of danger in the way, and ran off. In a minute he returned to ask the *word*. “ Gogue, said I, is the parole, (it signifies Owl.) A curse upon his father, says he, (meaning the owl’s father), and a curse upon their fathers who gave such unlucky words for the parole at night; no wonder misfortunes happen, says he, in Greek: he then returned to the guard under Laeca Mariam. In the mean time, surveying the camp around, I could not help doubting the truth of this alarm; for not a soul was stirring about Kefla Yafous’s tent, and the light scarcely burning. On the other hand, however, there seemed several in the tent of the Ras, and people moving about it, though the Tigré guard around were quiet, who, I knew well, would have been alarmed by the motion of a mouse.

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There was, however, still a light, and an unusual noise in the upper end of the camp to the N. E. Francisco now returned from the king's tent, and, without my speaking to him, said, in a great passion, "Those black fellows are all become mad; you don't keep them in any sort of order." "Has Laeca Mariam got ready a horse for me, said I; where is he?"—"When I delivered your orders, replied Francisco, to have a horse ready for you, he said there were fifty, but did not suppose you intended galloping to-night." Francisco continued, "I told him Fasil was in the camp; at which he laughed outright, said I was drunk, and wondered you had given me the parole with a curse upon its father; a great catch this word, to be sure, it will make me rich." "I am afraid, said I, friend, Laeca Mariam hath stated the truth; at least I never heard of an army cut to pieces so very quietly as ours is." While I was speaking, the flambeaux at the Ras's tent were all suddenly lighted, which was likewise done by Kefla Yafous, all the general officers, and lastly from the king's tent. This is a kind of torch, or flambeau, used by the janizary Aga, at Cairo and Constantinople, when he patrols the streets; in the night-time it is lighted, but the fire does not appear till you whirl it three or four times round your head, and then it bursts out into a bright flame. Michael had sixteen always on the guard, ever since the attempt upon his life by the Guragué. In a moment all the
camp

camp was lighted, and the people awakened, whilst, as nobody knew the reason, the tumult increased. Francisco, with great exultation, upon seeing the Ras's torches lighted, cried, "See who is drunk now; where are your jokes? this will be a fine night, and nobody is armed." "Sir, said I, you saw Laeca Mariam and his guard armed; so is every other guard in the camp as much as ever; and you may thank God you have my servant's lance and shield, so you are armed. I may drink coffee, though I very much fear there may be some embroil on foot, of which you may be yourself part of the occasion. Go, however, to the Ras's tent, and ask if he has any orders for me."

In short, we soon after found that the cause of all this disturbance was, that some part of Tesfos's men had come to the back of the camp, and attempted to recover the mules which had been taken from them; and they had succeeded in part, when they were discovered, pursued, and some of the mules retaken. At the sight of armed men running up and down the hill, an alarm spread that nobody knew the occasion of, till the Ras caused the mule-keeper to be bastinadoed in the morning. That day, the 26th, we received advice, that the Edjow Galla, and some other horse of the same district, had massacred all the people they met on their way to and from Gondar, and that a body of troops had marched into the town, which

which threatened to set it on fire if any more provisions were sent to the camp.

We were now without food or water; a great council was therefore held, in which it was agreed to decamp the 28th in the night, and return to Gondar on the 29th, in the morning. A present of fresh provisions had been sent to Ras Michael, and, in one of the baskets, a number of torches. A message was also delivered from Gusso, "That as he was informed the Ras intended travelling in the night, that therefore he had sent him store of torches, lest he should mistake his way to Gondar by having burnt all he had by him in the last night's alarm about Fasil." He declared, moreover, in name of all the Confederates, that it was their resolution not to molest him in his march; that the whole kingdom was in alliance with them to save the effusion of blood, now absolutely unnecessary, and to meet and treat with him at Gondar.

Upon receipt of this message, with the torches, the Ras flew into a most furious passion. He called for Kessa Yafous and Guebra Mascall, and sharply upbraided them with having betrayed him to his enemies. He gave orders to the troops to refresh themselves, for he was that day resolved to try the fortune of another battle. To this, however, it was replied by all the principal officers, That the army was starving, therefore a refreshment at this time was out of the question, and that fighting was as much so; for Gusso, having
sent

sent to the Abuna and to the King, had solemnly excommunicated his whole army if any harm was offered to them in person or baggage, if they marched directly back to Gondar that night, as they had of their own accord before intended ; and that the army was resolved, therefore, as one man, to return ; and, if the Ras did not agree to it, there was great fear they would disband in the night, and leave him in the hands of the enemy, without terms. The Ras was now obliged to make a virtue of necessity ; and it was given in orders, that the army should be ready to decamp at eight in the evening, but nobody should strike their tent before that hour on pain of death. The old general was ashamed to be seen for the first time flying before his enemies.

It was plain to be read in every body's countenance, that this resolution was agreeable to them all. I confess, however, that I thought the measure a very dangerous one, considering how much blood the king's army had so lately spilt, and the ordinary prejudices universally adopted in that country, allowing to every individual the right of retaliation. Before I struck my tent, I called Yafine to me, and told him that Ayto Confu, being wounded and a prisoner, myself necessarily obliged to attend the king, and the event of that night's retreat unknown to any body, I thought he could do neither himself nor me any further service by staying where he was ; that therefore, so long as the road to Azazo was open to him,

he should march through Dembea, as if going to Fafil, then turn on the right behind the hills of Koscam, and make the best of his way to Ras el Feel, in which government he should maintain the strictest discipline, and be particularly careful of the intrigues of Abd el Jeleel, the former governor, whose application I should defeat if I had any interest, or if the king remained, both which I thought very improbable. I annexed, moreover, this condition, that on his part he should be active and unwearied in procuring information concerning the properest way of my attempting to reach Sennaar; I enjoined him also to be very circumstantial in all the advices which he sent to me at Gondar; that they should be written in Arabic, and sent directly to me by my black servant Soliman, who was with him, and told him that I myself should join him as soon as possible. Yafine, with tears in his eyes, protested against leaving me in the dangerous situation of that night; he said we should be all cut to pieces as soon as we were in the plain, and that there was not a man of the troops under him who would not rather die with me, than abandon me to be murdered by the hands of these faithless Christian dogs, who never were to be bound by oath or promise. He said, it would be incomparably safer, as they were all under my command, that I should put myself at their head, and continue my march to Ras el Feel, where, if I was once arrived, Ayto Confu's troops, being behind me

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at Tchenking, that is, between me and Goudar, I might, at my own leisure, solicit a safe conduct to Senagar, upon a number of people. I proposed this proposal at first struck me as extremely feasible; but reflecting on my solemn promise to the king, not to leave him without his direct permission, that Goudar had assured me of safety, I kept close to his promise, that it would be a breach of trust to leave my Goudar, perhaps, unprotected at Goudar, and that obsequious instructions would have the effect of making my return through the desert imperfect. — I rejected this proposal, and dismissed Yafind, with orders to adhere inviolably to the instructions I had given him. As for the king himself, his countenance was not changed, nor did he say to me one word that day in confidence, whether he did or did not intend to return to Goudar.

As no body knew what conditions were made, or whether any were really made at all, fear kept the common soldiers under obedience, till it was night. The first who began to stir off, it being nearly dark, were the women who carried the milk, jars, and the heavy burdens, these were in great numbers; upon which, the soldiers were in motion, and the Russian tenters were struck off, as it was night, blackness, and the whole army, from obsequious orders, with confusion, never to be forgot or described, presently followed, every body making the best of their

way

way to get safe down the hill. At first setting out I kept close by the king; but, without treading upon, or riding over a number of people, I could not keep my place. I was now, for the first time, on one of the strong black horses that came last from Sennaar, given me by the king, and he was so impatient and fretful at being pressed on by the crowd of men and beasts, that there was no keeping him within any sort of bounds. The descent of the hill had become very slippery, and men, horses, and mules were rolling promiscuously over one another.

I resolved to try for myself some other way that might be less thronged. I went to the place where Woodage Asahel descended when he was shot by Sebastos; but the ground there was more uneven, and fully as much crowded. I then crossed the road to the eastward, where the Ras's tent stood, and where Kessa Yafous's two nephews had gone round to dislodge Ayto Tesfes: there was a considerable number of people even here, but it was not a crowd, and they were mostly women. I determined to attempt it, and got into a small slanting road, which I hoped would conduct me to the bed of the torrent; but I found, upon going half way down the hill, that, in place of a road, it had been a hollow made by a torrent, which ended on a precipice, and below, and on each side of this, the hill was exceedingly steep, the small distance I could see.

to In Abyssinia, the camp-ovens for making their bread are in form of two tea-saucers joined bottom to bottom, and are something less than three feet in diameter, being made of a light, beautiful pot-ter's ware, which, although red when first made, turns to a glossy black colour after being greased with butter. This being placed upright, a fire of charcoal is put under the bottom part; the bread, like pan-cakes, is pasted all within the side of the upper cavity, or bowl, over which is laid a cover of the same form or shape. It is in form of a broad wheel, and a woman carries one of these upon her back for baking bread in the camp. It happened that, just as I was deliberating whether to proceed or return, a woman had rolled one of these down the hill on purpose, or let it fall by chance; in which ever was the case, it came bounding, and just passed behind my horse. Whether it touched him or not I cannot tell; but it deter- mined him, without further deliberation, to spurn all constraint of his rider. On the first leap that he made it was with the utmost difficulty I avoided going over his head. I will not pretend to say what followed; I was deprived of all sense or re- flection, till stumbling often, and sliding down upon his haunches often, I found myself at the bottom of the hill perfectly stupified with fear, but safe and sound in body, though my saddle was lying upon the horse's neck. Soon after, I saw a fire lighted on the top of the hill above where Ras Michael's tent stood, and

and I did not doubt but that it was the work of some traitor, as a signal to the rebels that we were now in the plain in the greatest confusion. I made all haste therefore to go round and join the king, passed Deg Ohig incumbered with carcasses of men and beasts, from which, as well as from the bottom of the hill, a terrible stench arose, which must soon have forced us out of the camp if we had not resolved, of our own accord, to remove. A little further in the opening to the river Mariam, I found myself in the middle of about twenty persons, three or four of whom were upon thules, in long white cloths, as if in peace, the rest apparently soldiers; this was Engedah's brother, Ayle, whom I was passing without recollecting him; when he cried, Where do you come from? Yagubed this is not a night for white men like you to be alone; come with me, and I will carry you to your friend Engedah. My horse, replied I, found a new way for himself down the hill, and I confess I would rather be alone than with so much company: our colour by this light seems to be pretty much the same. Remember me to Engedah as I am seeking to join the king. Immediately after, I got into the crowd: though they were now in the plain, they still kept a line close to the foot of the mountain, in fear of the enemy's horse. I passed on at a brisk walk as my horse could go; not daring to consider of those who were before me in the plain as I had

been on the side of the hill. Among those that were still in the crowd, that had not got yet down the hill, I heard the Abuna's servant saying they had lost their mules, and denouncing excommunication and curses against those who had stolen his baggage. I could not refrain from a fit of laughter at the stupidity of that priest, to think any man of such a nation would pay attention to his anathemas in such a scene. Soon after, however, I overtook the Abuna himself, with Ozoro Altah. He asked me in Arabic, and in a very mournful tone of voice, what I thought they were going to do? I answered, in the same language, "Pray for them, father, for they know not what to do." Ozoro Altah now told me the king was a great way before them, with Ras Michael, and advised me to stay and accompany her. As he spoke this confidently, and it was part of the advice Gusho had given me if I missed the king, I was deliberating what course I should pursue, when a great noise of horse and men was heard on the side of the plain, and presently the Abuna and Ozoro Altah were surrounded by a large body of horsemen, whose cries and language I did not understand, and whom therefore I took for Galla. As I found my horse strong and willing, and being alone, and unincumbered with baggage, I thought it was better to keep free, and not trust to whom these strangers might be. I therefore got out of the line of the troops towards the plain, spurred

spurred my horse, and arrived at the body of cavalry where the king was.

As I had a white turban upon my head, (having shaved the fore part of it after the blow I had received from the stone) I was employed taking this off before I presented myself to the king, when somebody said out loud, Ozoro Esther is taken prisoner. Ras Michael answered, That is impossible; Ozoro Esther is here. It is Ozoro Altash and the Abuna, said I, from behind; I came just now from them. By whom are they taken? says the king. By the Galla, I believe, answered I; at least by men whose language I did not understand, though indeed I took no time to consider, but they are close in our rear, and I suppose they will be here presently. Here! says the Ras, what will they do here? It must be Powussen, and the troops of Lasta, to recover his mother-in-law, that she may not go to Gondar; and it is the Tcheratz Agow language that Yagoube has taken for Galla. It is so, says another horseman; the people of Lasta have carried her off, but without hurting any body. This I thought a good sign, and that they were under orders, for a bloodier or more cruel race was not in the army, the Galla not excepted; and they had met with their deserts, and had suffered considerably in the course of this short campaign. The whole road was now as smooth as a carpet; and we had scarce done speaking when Ras Michael's mule fell flat on the ground, and threw

him

him upon his face in a small puddle of water. He was quickly lifted up unhurt, and set upon his mule again. We passed the Mogetch, and at about 200 yards from the bridge, upon ground equally plain as the former, the mule fell again, and threw the Ras another time in the dirt, on which a general murmur and groan was heard from all his attendants. For every body interpreted this as a token that his power and fortune were gone from him forever. Another mule was speedily brought, but he refused to mount it, and we passed on by the Mahometan again, and up to Confu's house, by the Mdah's house. He could not, however, help observing how justly the Ras had now punished the murderer of his fingers in that very spot, when he retreated from Mariam. Oshat and entered Gondar. The king went directly to the palace, the Ras to his own house, and, by the secretary's advice, I went with him to that of the Abuna, where I left my Greek servants with my gold chain, and some trifles I wanted to preserve, together with my instruments. I then dressed myself in the habit of peace, and returned to the palace, where, remembering the advice of Gusko, I resolved to expect my fate with the king. Upon seeing me with the fore part of my head shaven, and remembering the cause, as his first mark of favour he ordered me to cover my head, a thing otherwise not permitted in the king's presence to any of his household.

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The king's servants brought me a bull's hide for my bed; and although many a night I have wanted rest upon less dangerous occasions, I scarcely ever slept more soundly, till I heard the crackling of the whips of the Serach Maffery, about five o'clock in the morning of the 29th. He performs this function much louder than a French postilion upon finishing a post, it being the signal for the king to rise. There was, indeed, no occasion for this custom, now there was no court, nor judgment of causes civil or criminal. The palace was quite deserted; even the king's slaves, of both sexes, (fearing to be carried off to Begemder and Amhara) had hid themselves among the rocks, and in the houses of private friends, so that the king was left with very few attendants. When he rose, he went directly to the palace Gondar. The king went to his own house, and by the secretary's advice, I went with him. I went with him to the Abyssinian, where I left my Greek, my gold chain, and some trinkets I wanted to preserve together with my instruments. I then dressed myself in the habit of peace, and returned to the palace, where, remembering the advice of Gulio, I resolved to expect my fate with the king. Upon seeing me with the fore part of my head shaven, and remembering the cause, as his first mark of favour he ordered me to cover my head, a thing otherwise appointed in the king's presence to any of his

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Angab; on the road from Woggor to Gondar, and all along the Angab, till it joined the Kaba, and Kalmati Gusho's camp, were Powysen and the rest of the confederate army; so that by nine o'clock the town was completely invested, as it a wall had been built round it. The water being all in the position of the river, sentinels were by them placed along the banks of each river, with orders to suffer every townman to fill single jars, such as one man or woman could carry, and

Rebel Army invests Gondar—King's Troops deliver up their Arms—The Murderers of Joas assassinated—Gusbo made Ras—Ras Michael carried away Prisoner by Powysen—Negbe's return to Koscam—Fasil arrives at Gondar—King acknowledged by all Parties—Bad Conduct of Gusbo—Obliged to fly, but is taken and put in Irons.

ABOUT eight o'clock in the morning of the 29th of May, the day immediately following the night of our retreat, came Gusbo's Fit-Auraris, and marked out the camp for his master between the Mahometan town and the church of Ledeta, on the very spot where Michael had encamped after his late return from Tigre; Coque Abou Barea from Ledeta to Koscam; Aylo and Ayabdar on the other side of the Kaba, in a line passing by Klodna Raphael, the Abuna's house at the foot of the mountain, above Debra Berhan; Ayto Tesfos in the valley below, by the side of the Angab;

Angrab; on the road from Woggora to Gondar, and all along the Angrab, till it joined the Kahha, and Kafmati Gulsho's camp, were Powuffen and the rest of the confederate army; so that by nine o'clock the town was completely invested, as if a wall had been built round it. The water being all in possession of the enemy, centinels were by them placed along the banks of each river, with orders to suffer every townsman to fill single jars, such as one man or woman could carry, and to break any supernumerary jars, that might be brought by way of securing a larger provision*.

All the people of consequence who had property in and about Gondar, who had fled to Fasil and to the provinces, from fear of Ras Michael when he returned from Tigré, had gone back upon Gulsho's word, each man to his house; Gondar was full of men in arms. In Gulsho's and Ayabdar's army, and depending on them, was the property of all Gondar. Ras Woodage, Gulsho's father, and brother to Ayabdar, had been Rabea Yafous' time, till he died, universally beloved and regretted; Ayto Engedan and Ayto, son of Kafmati Elmet, (by a sister of king Yafous) had the property of near one half of the town. Though Engedan was prisoner, and Ayto had married Ras Michael's daughter, they were, by interest and inclination, united to Gulsho, and had served Michael only through fear, from attachment to foot of the mountain, above Debra Berhan; Ayto
 * For extinguishing fire. the

the king, for that Gusho and Ayabdar were the only citizens in whom the inhabitants of Gondar confided. Powussen, and the rest, were looked upon as free-booters in their inclinations, at least by the townsmen; very little better than Michael, on his troops of Tigre. From the moment the town was invested, and indeed in the field, before Gusho had taken the lead, and though neither Ayabdar nor Powussen were his friends, all Gondar was, at his command; and in it an army infinitely superior in number and riches, now they had got such a chieftain, to all the Confederates put together, and Michael's army added to them. Gusho, a man of great understanding, born and bred in Gondar, knew this perfectly well, and that he alone was looked up to as the father of his country. He knew, moreover, that he could not ruin Michael so effectually as to lodge him in Gondar, amidst a multitude of enemies, and blockade him there before he had time for resources. He therefore detached Ayto Tesfos, the very day he arrived before the town, after Darien, Basta of Belesin, whom Ras Michael had sent before him into Woggora to effect a passage through that province into Tigre by fair means, promises, and presents. Tesfos came up with Darien before he had time to enter upon his commission, and, having beaten and taken him prisoner, raised all Woggora in arms, against Michael, so that not

a man could longer pass between Tigre and Gondar.

No person from the rebel army had yet entered Gondar. The king's secretary, Azage Kyrillos, a relation of Gusho, had gone to his camp the day of his arrival. The same day the kettle-drums were brought to the brink of Kabba, and a proclamation made, That all soldiers of the province of Tigre, or who had borne arms under Ras Michael, should, on the morrow before mid-day, bring their arms, offensive and defensive, and deliver them on a spot fixed upon near the church of Ledeta, to commissaries appointed for the purpose of receiving them, with further intimation to the inhabitants of Gondar, That any arms found in any house in that town, after noon of the day of proclamation, should subject the owner of such house and arms to death, and the house, or houses, to be razed to their foundation.

The first of the Tigre troops who set this example was Guebra Mascal; he carried down to the place appointed, and surrendered, about 6000 muskets, belonging to the Ras and his family; all the rest of the principal officers followed, for the inhabitants of Gondar were willing inquisitors, so that the whole arms were delivered before the hour appointed, and locked up in the church of Ledeta, under a strong guard both without and within the church. The Tigre soldiers, after surrendering their arms, were not suffered to depart, but a space was assigned between Gusho's tent and

and the town, where they were disposed that night, and centinels placed upon them, that they might not disperse. This indeed was needless; for they were every day surrounded with troops and enemies, so that all their wealth remained with their landlords in Gondar, which home they were not suffered again to enter, a measure which greatly added to Gusho's popularity in the town. A great number of flour sacks were brought down to Gusho's camp, and many mules, loaded therewith, were delivered to the disarmed army, sufficient to carry them by speedy marches to their own country, for which they had orders to set out the next morning. Kefla Yesout alone, with about 400 men, had shut himself up in the church of Debra Berhan, where there was water, and he had carried in sufficient provisions for several days. He refused therefore to surrender upon the general summons; on which Powless, who was encamped immediately below him, sent an officer to require him to submit, which he not only peremptorily refused, but told the officer, that, unless he instantly retired, he would give orders to fire upon him, as he had a treaty with Gusho, and, till that was ratified by Gusho himself, he would not surrender, nor suffer any other person to approach his post; at any rate, that he did not intend to surrender to a man of Powless's low birth, however high his present post had raised him, which he no longer acknowledged, being the mere gift
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of Michael, one complaint against whom was that of levelling and confounding the nobility with their inferiors.

Gusno accordingly sent an officer, a man of great character, and a relation of the king, with a confirmation of his promise; whereupon Kessa Yafous surrendered, and sent down his soldiers, with what arms he pleased, to Gusno's camp, carrying the rest privately to his own house, to which he retired that very evening. Kessa Yafous was much beloved by the inhabitants of Gondar, though a Tigran, and perhaps in neither party was there a man so universally esteemed. He had done the townsmen often great service, having always stood between Michael and them in those moments of wrath and vengeance, when no one else dared to speak; and, in particular, he had saved the town from burning that morning the Ras had retired with the king to Tigre, when warned, as he said, by an apparition of Michael the archangel, or more probably of the devil, to put the inhabitants of Gondar to the sword, and let the city on fire; a measure that was supported by Nebrit Teda, and several other leading men among the Tigrans. If the devil can speak thus, here surely was one example of it; Gondar that very day had proved fatal to the Ras; and Kessa Yafous himself told me, long after Michael was gone, and all was peace, that having visited him that very evening he left Debra Berhad, Michael had privately upbraided him with having prevented

ed his burning the town, and told him, that his guardian spirit, Saint Michael the archangel, or the devil, or whatever we may please to call it, had left him, and never appeared to him again since he had passed the river Tacanet on his return to Gondar; and to this he attributed his present misfortunes.

All the king's arms were surrendered with the rest, and Kefla Yafous was the only man that remained unsubdued, a distinction due to his superlative merit, and preserved to him by his enemies themselves in the very heat of conquest.

As for the Ras, he had continued in the house belonging to his office, visited only by some private friends, but had sent Ozoro Risher to the Itghe's at Koscam, as soon as he entered Gondar. He ate, drank, and slept as usual, and reasoned upon the event that had happened with great equanimity and seeming indifference. There was no appearance of guards set upon him, but every motion and look were privately but strictly watched. The next day, when he heard how his disarmed men were treated by the populace, when they were dismissed to flight, he burst into tears, and cried out in great agony, Had I died before this, I had been happy! He played no more at draughts, by which game formerly he pretended to divine the issue of every affair of consequence, but gave his draught-board and men to a private friend; at the same time renouncing his pretended

pretended divinations, as decentful and sinful, by the confidence he had placed in them.

The king behaved with the greatest firmness and composure; he was indeed graver than usual, and talked less, but was not at all dejected. Scarce any body came near him the first day, or even the second, excepting the priests, some of the judges, and old inhabitants of the town, who had taken no part. Some of the priests and monks, as is their custom, used certain liberties, and mixed a considerable degree of impertinence in their conversations, hinting it as doubtful, whether he would remain on the throne, and mentioning it, as on the part of the people, that he had imbibed from Michael a propensity towards cruelty and bloodshed, what some months ago no man in Gondar dared to have furnished for his life. These he only answered with a very severe look, but said nothing. One of these speeches being reported to Gudho, not as a complaint from the king, but through a bystander who heard it, that nobleman ordered the offender (a priest of Erba Tensa, a church in Woggora) to be stript naked to his waist, and whipt with thongs three times round Aylo Meidan till his back was bloody, for this violation of the majesty of the sovereign: and this example, which met with the public approbation of all parties, the clergy only excepted, very much lessened that insolence which the king's misfortunes had excited.

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He had ate nothing the first day but a small piece of wheat-loaf, dividing the rest among the few servants that attended him, who had all fared better than he, among their friends in town, though they did not own it. The second day began in the same stile, and lasted till noon, without any appearance of provisions. After the surrendry of the arms, however, came great plenty, both from the town and the camp, and so continued ever after; but he ate very sparingly, though he had generally a very good appetite, and ordered the residue to be given to his servants, or the poor about the gates of the palace, many of whom, he said, must starve by the long stay of so large an army. He seemed to be totally forgotten. About three o'clock of the second day came his secretary from Gussho, staid about an hour, and returned immediately; but what had passed I did not hear, at least at that time. There was no alteration in his looks or behaviour. He went early to bed, and had not yet changed the cloaths in which he came from the camp.

The next day the unfortunate troops of Tigré, loaded with curses and opprobrious language, pelted with stones and dirt, and a few way-laid and slain for private injuries, were conducted up the hill above Debra Berhan, on the road through Woggora to Tigré, by a guard of horse from Gussho's camp, who protected them with great humanity as far as they were able; but it was out of the power of any force but that of an army to protect

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protect them from the enraged populace, over whom
 they had tyrannised so many years. Arrived at
 the river Angrab, in the rear of Powullen's army,
 they were consigned to him, and he delivered
 them to Aydo Tesfos, who was to escort them
 across the Taccabadi. Many of the mob, however,
 continued to pursue them even farther; but these
 were all to a man disarmed, and stripped naked, on
 their return to Gondar, by Tesfos and Powullen's
 soldiers, who justly judged, that in the like situa-
 tion they would themselves have met with no
 better treatment. While every rank of people was intent upon this
 spectacle, a body of Galla, belonging to Maitha,
 stole privately into the town, and plundered se-
 veral houses: they came next into the king's pa-
 lace, and in the presence-chamber, where he was
 sitting alone in an alcove, whilst, just by his side,
 but out of sight, and without the alcove, I and
 two of his servants were sitting on the floor. This
 room, in the time of Yalou and the Itighe, (the
 days of luxury and splendour in the Abyssinian
 court), had been magnificently hung with mirrors,
 brought at great expence from Venice, by way
 of Arabia and the Red Sea; these were being
 neatly fixed in copper gilt frames by some Greek
 filigree workers from Cairo; but the mirrors
 were now mostly broken by various accidents,
 especially when the palace was wrecked by fire in
 Joas's time, upon Michael's coming from the
 campaign of Begemder. These savages, though

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they certainly saw the king at the other end of the room, attached themselves to the glass nearest the door, which was a large oblong one, and after they had made many grimaces, and a variety of antics before it, one of them struck it just in the middle with the butt-end of his lance, and broke it to shivers, which fell tinkling on the floor. Some of these pieces they took up, but in the end they were mostly reduced to powder with the repeated strokes of their lances. There were three glasses in the alcove where the king sat, as also one in the wings on each side without the alcove; under the king's right hand we three were sitting, and the Galla were engaged with a mirror near the door, at the other end of the room, on the left side, so that there was but one glass more to break before they arrived at those in the alcove where the king was sitting.

I was in great fear of the consequences, as they were about thirteen or fourteen in number; nor did we know how many more of their companions might be below, or in the town, or of what party they were, nor whether resistance on our part was lawful. We three had no arms but a short knife at our girdle, nor had the king any, so that we were in the greatest fear that if their humour of breaking the glasses had continued when they came near the king, he would strike one of them, and we should be all massacred: We all three therefore got up and stood before the king, who made a gentle motion with his hand, as if to say,
“ Stay

“ Stay a little, or, have patience.” At this instant, Tensa Christos, (a man of considerable authority in Gondar, who was understood by Gusho to be trusted with the care of the town, though he had no name or post, for there was yet no form of government settled,) hearing the Galla had plundered houses, and gone into the palace, followed them as fast as possible, with about a hundred stout young men belonging to Gondar, well-armed. The Galla soon saw there was a more serious occupation awaiting them, and ran out to the great hall of the king’s chamber, called Aderasha, when one of these soldiers of Gondar shut the door of the room where the king sat. The Galla at first made a shew of resistance; but two of them being very much wounded, and seeing themselves in a house where they did not know their way, and all assistance from their comrades impossible, they surrendered their arms; they then were tied two and two, and sent in this manner down to Gusho’s camp, who immediately ordered two of them to be hanged, and the rest to be whipt and dismissed.

Tensa Christos, after having done this good service, came into the room to the king, and kissed the ground in the usual manner before him. The king immediately ordered him to rise, gave him his hands to kiss, and then permitted him to withdraw, without having said one word in his commendation for having delivered him from so great a danger. That same day, a little after

A a a 2

noon,

noon, a party of soldiers was sent into the town, who apprehended Shalaka Becro and his son; Nebrit Tecla, and his two sons; two sons of Lika Netcho a priest, and another man, whose name I have forgot, in all eight persons, natives of the province of Tigré, dependants and servants of Ras Michael, and murderers of the late king Joas. These being brought to the market-place, were delivered into the hands of the Edjow Galla, formerly Joas's guard. Becro and his son were hewn to pieces with knives; Nebrit Tecla's sons, the eldest first, and then the youngest, were thrust through with lances; and their father being then brought to them where they lay, and desired to say if he knew who they were, and answering in the negative, he was immediately cut to pieces, as were the others, with great circumstances of cruelty, and their mangled bodies thrown about the streets. These were all the executions which followed this great and sudden revolution: a proof of very exemplary moderation in the conquerors, considering the number of people concerned in the parricide first, and the consequential rebellion after. Lika Netcho, in particular, fully as guilty as his sons, was nevertheless spared, because he had married one of the king's relations.

As yet none of the chiefs of the rebels had entered Gondar. Messages had passed, but not frequently, between the king and Gusfo; fewer still between him and Powussen: as for the rest, they seemed to take no lead at all.

On

On the 1st of June, Guscho and Powuffen came both to the house of the Ras, where they interrogated him very roughly as to all his past conduct. Till the execution of Joas's murderers, he had constantly dressed himself in his very best apparel, with all the insignia of command. As soon as this was told him, he cloathed himself plainly, and constantly in white, with a cowl of the same colour on his head, like the monks, a sign he had retired from the world. It seemed as if this was done through a fondness for life, for by that act he devoted the remainder of his days to obscurity and penitence. Nothing remarkable happened at this interview, at least as far as was known. From thence Guscho and Powuffen went to the king's palace, where they did homage, and took the oaths of allegiance.

It was there resolved that Guscho should be Ras, and the other places were all disposed of. From this time forward the king began to have a shew of government, no party having testified any sort of discontent with him; on the contrary, each of the rebel chiefs now waited upon him separately, and had long conferences with him; but, what bade fairest to re establish his authority entirely was, the dissensions that evidently reigned among the leaders of the rebels themselves, whom we, however, shall no longer consider as such, not because their treason had prospered, but because they were now returned to their duty. It was strongly suspected that a treaty was on foot between

tween Gusfo and Michael, by which the latter, in consideration of a large sum, was to put the former again in possession of the province of Tigré; others again said, that Kefla Yafous, at Ras Michael's desire, was to be made governor of Tigré, and to have a large sum of gold, which Michael was supposed to have concealed there, and which he was to remit to Gusfo, whilst he and Michael were to understand each other about the government of the province.

Be that as it may, Powussen, on the 4th of June, without any previous notice given to Gusfo, marched into Gondar with a thousand horse, and, without further ceremony, ordered Ras Michael to be placed upon a mule, and, joining the rest of his army, who had all struck their tents, marched away so suddenly to Begemder, that Ozoro Esther, then residing at the queen her mother's house at Koscam, had scarcely time to send her old husband a fresh mule, and some supply of necessary provisions. All the rest of the troops decamped immediately after, the rains beginning now to be pretty constant, and the soldiers desirous to be at home. Some of the great men, indeed, remained at Gondar, such as Ayabdar, Engedan, and others, who had views of preferment. Gusfo took possession of the Ras's house and office; the king's officers and servants returned to the palace; the places of those that had fallen in battle were filled, and the whole town began to resume an appearance of peace, which every one

one who considered feared would be of a very short duration.

A few days after the army of Begemder had left Gondar, Powuffien sent the usurper Socinios, loaded with irons, from Agar Salam, a small town in Begemder, where he had been kept prisoner. He was brought before the king in the same equipage he arrived, and being interrogated who he was, answered with great boldness, that he was Socinios, son to king Yafous, son of Bacuffa; that he had not sought to be made king, but was forced by the Iteghé and Sanuda; this every one knew to be true. Soon after his mother was examined; but denying now what she had formerly sworn, that she ever had any intimate connection with the late king Yafous, Socinios was sentenced to death; but being in his manners, figure, and conversation perfectly despicable, the king directed he should serve as a slave in his kitchen, whence he was taken, some time afterwards, and hanged for theft.

On the 21st of June, the Iteghé arrived from Gojam, and all the people of Gondar flocked to see her without the town. Gusfo had met her at Tedda; and, at the same time that he welcomed her, told her, as from the king, that it was his orders that neither Palambaras Mammo, nor Likaba Beecho, were to enter the town with her. This she considered as a very high affront, and the work of Gusfo, not the king's orders. She upbraided Gusfo with avarice, pride, and malice, declared

declared him a greater tyrant than Michael, without his capacity, forbidding him to appear any more before her, and with great difficulty could be prevailed to go on to Koscam instead of returning to Gojam. It is impossible to conceive the enthusiasm with which the fight of the old queen inspired all sorts of people. Guscho had no troops, the king as few, being left even without a servant in his palace. Then was the season for mischief, had not Fafil been hovering with his army, without declaring his approbation or disapprobation of any thing that had been done, or was doing.

About the end of June he came at once to Abba Samuel, without announcing himself beforehand, according to his usual custom, and he paid his first visit to the Iteghè, then a short one to the king, where I saw him: he was very facetious with me, and pretended I had promised him my horse when I returned from Maitsha, which I excused, by observing the horse was out of town. Well, well, says he, that shall not save you; tell me where he is and I will send for him, and give you the best mule in the army in exchange, and take my chance of recovering him wherever he is. With all my heart, replied I; you will find him, perhaps in the valley of Serbraxos, at the foot of the hill, opposite to the south ford of the river Mariam. He laughed heartily at this, shook me by the hand at parting, saying, Well, well, for all this you shall not want your mule.

The

The king was exceedingly pleased at what had passed, and said, "I wish you would tell me, Yagoubé, how you reconcile all these people to you. It is a secret which will be of much more importance to me than to you. There is Gusho now, for example, so proud of his present fortune, that he scarcely will say a civil word to me; and Fasil has brought me a list of his own servants, whom he wants to make mine without asking my leave, (Adera Tacca Georgis, whom he named to be Fit-Auraris to the king, as he had done formerly when he wanted to quarrel with Socinios, Gubena to be Cantiba, and some others), yet he never sees you come into the room but he begins immediately joking and pleasant conversation.

After these appointments, which were not disputed with him, though otherwise very much against the king's inclination, Fasil retired with his army to Maitsha.

In the mean time, Gusho set every thing to sale, content with the money the offices produced, and what he could squeeze from people who had crimes, real or alledged, to compound for. He did not perceive that steps were taking by his enemies which would soon deprive him of all the advantages he enjoyed. Instead of attending to this, he amused himself with mortifying the Iteghè, whose daughter, Welleta Israel, he had formerly married, but who had long left him by the persuasion of her mother. He thought it was an affront to his dignity that the king had pardoned

Likaba

Likaba Beecho, and Palambaras Mammo, the very day after he had forbid them to enter the town; and, what was still stronger, that the king, without his consent, had sent an invitation to the Iteghé to return to Gondar, and govern as his mother, to the extent she did in the time of Joas; he resolved therefore to attempt the creating a misunderstanding between the king and queen, a matter not very difficult in itself to bring about.

Gusho had confiscated, in the name of the king, all the queen's villages, which made her believe that this offer of the king to bring her to Gondar was an insidious one. In order to make the breach the wider, he had also prevailed upon the king's mother to come to Gondar, and insist with her son to be crowned, and take the title and state of Iteghé. The king was prevailed upon to gratify his mother, under pretence that the Iteghé had refused to come upon his invitation; but this, as it was a pretence only, so it was expressly a violation of the law of the land, which permits but one Iteghé, and never allows the nomination of a new one while the former is in life, however distant a relation she may be to the then reigning king. In consequence of this new coronation, two large villages, Tshemmera and Tocussa, which belonged to the Iteghé as appendages of her royalty, of course devolved upon the king's own mother, newly crowned, who sending her people to take possession, the inhabitants not only refused to admit her officers, but forcibly drove them away, declaring

declaring they would acknowledge no other mistresses but their old one, to whom they were bound by the laws of the land.

If Gussho, in this manner, dealt hardly with the queen, his behaviour to the king was neither more just nor generous: he had not only failed to advance any gold for the king's subsistence, but had intercepted that part of his revenue which he knew was ready to be paid him, and in the hands of others of his subjects. A stated daily allowance was, indeed, delivered to the king in kind for the maintenance of his household, but even this was smaller than had been settled by Ras Michael; besides which, 120 jars of honey, being one day sent the king from Damot, and at the same time 1000 cotton coats from Walkayt, both these were seized upon by Gussho, without any part being offered to the king, who thereupon determined to break with him, as did the Iteghé from the former provocation.

Ayabdar, never reconciled to him before the battle of Serbraxos, had fresh reason of difference with him from an unequal distribution of Ras Michael's effects, while Engedan, who had been promised the province of Kuara, and whom the king very much favoured, solicited that post in vain, unless he would advance a thousand ounces of gold, which he positively refused to do. The king fomented all these complaints by sending a person of consequence to Powussen, who advised him

him to arrest Gushe immediately, and promised, if resistance was made, to be at Gondar in three days. Engedan and Ayabdar were trusted with the execution of this, but as Gushe was beloved by the people of Gondar, the secret was not so well kept but that it came to his ears.

On the 16th of July, (the feast of Saint Michael) Gushe pretended he had made a vow to visit the church of that Saint at Azazo, and accordingly, early in the morning, he set out for that village, attended with thirty horse and fifty musqueteers; but no sooner had he passed the church than his real intention appeared, and he was pursued by Gubeno, Cantiba of Dembea; Ayto Adigo, Palambaras; and Ayto Engedan. Gubeno alone, being hearty in the cause, came up with him first as they had passed the river Derma, when Gushe, seeing Gubeno's troops close behind him, turned quickly upon them, repassed the river, and, having killed two of the foremost with his own hand, and repelled the rest, he returned across the river, and faced about upon the banks of it. Upon the other troops coming up, he called to Engedan, putting him in mind how lately he had been in his hands, and advising them all to return to Gondar, and tell the king he should again be with him in fifteen days.

A council was thereupon held, and as it was plain, from the countenance of the man, that he was resolved to resist to the utmost, none of the leaders then present thought themselves warranted to risk the

the death of a person so noble, and so powerfully related, especially in an obscure skirmish, such as was then likely to happen, the motives for which were not publicly known; they accordingly all returned to Gondar, leaving the Ras to pursue his way, who being now advanced as far as Deg-wassa, and thinking himself out of all danger, was suddenly surrounded by Aclog, governor of a little district there, and even from him he would have escaped by his own courage and exertion, had not his horse sunk in miry ground whence he could not recover him. After receiving these news, the king sent his Fit-Auraris, Adera Tacca Georgis, and Ayto Engedan, with a number of troops, to bring Gusho to town, when he returned a miserable figure, with his head shaven: he was cloathed in black, and was confined that same day (the first of August) a close prisoner, and in irons, in a high, damp, uninhabited tower of the king's house, without being pitied by either party.

It was now the season of the year when this country used to overflow with milk and honey; because, being in all the low part of it covered with rain, the horsemen and soldiers, who used to obstruct the roads, were all retired to quarters, and the peasants, bringing provisions to the market, passed the high grounds in safety; all sorts of people, profiting by the plenty which this occasioned, indulged themselves to the greatest excess in every sort of pleasure; to which their respective

tive appetites led them. The rains had fallen, indeed, as usual, but had not, however, stopped the march of the armies, and if not a famine, at least a scarcity of provisions in Gondar, had been the consequence; not a word was heard, indeed, of Ras Michael, whether he was alive or dead, but his familiar spirits seemed to preside in the air, and pour down mischief.

C H A P. XXX.

The Author obtains Liberty to return Home—Takes Leave of the Itghé at Koscam—Last Interview with the Monks.

SINCE the queen came again to Koscam, I had passed a great part of my time there, but my health declining every day, I had obtained, with great difficulty, liberty from her to attempt my return home. The king, too, after a hundred exceptions and provisos, had at length been brought to give an unwilling consent. I had seen also Metical Aga's servant, who, upon finding Ras Michael was disgraced, would not stay, but hastened back, and would fain have prevailed upon me to return with him through Tigré into Arabia. But besides that I was determined to attempt completing my journey through Sennaar and the desert, I by no means liked the risk of passing again through Masuah, to experience a second time the brutal manners of the Naybe and garrison of that place.

Captain

Captain Thomas Price, of the Lion of Bombay, had been obliged, by his business with the government of Mecca, to continue at Jidda till the season after I went from thence to Abyssinia. I had already heard once from him, and now a second time, He informed me my countrymen had been in the greatest pain for me; that several reports had been current, both at Jidda and Mocha, of my having been assassinated; sometimes it was said by the Naybe of Masuah; sometimes that it had happened at Gondar; by others at Sennaar, in my return home. Captain Price wrote me in this last letter, that, thinking I must be distressed for want of money, he had left orders with Ibrahim Seraff, the English broker at Jidda, to advance me 1000 crowns, desiring my draft to be sent to Ibrahim, directed to him or his brother at Bombay, and to make it payable to a gentleman of that name who lived in Smithfield. I cannot omit mentioning these instances of the philanthropy and generosity of Mr. Price, to whom I bore no relation, and who was but a common acquaintance, whom I had acquired among my countrymen during my stay at Jidda. The only title I had to this consideration was, that he thought I was probably in distress, and that as it was in his power alone to relieve me, this in itself, to a noble mind, constituted a sufficient obligation. I do not believe Captain Price was able to read a word of Latin, so that sentiment in Terence, "Homo sum, nihil humani

“ mihi alienum esse puto,” was as much an original in Mr. Price’s breast as if it had never before been uttered.

I told Metical Aga’s servant the bad news I had got from Sennaar, and he agreed perfectly with the contents, adding, that the journey was not practicable; he declared they were so inhuman and so barbarous a race, that he would not attempt the journey, Mahometan as he was, for half the Indies. I begged him to say no more on that head, but to procure from his master, Metical Aga at Mecca, a letter to any man of consequence he knew at Sennaar.

My resolution being therefore taken, and leave obtained, this will be now the place to resume the account of my finances. I have already gone so far as to mention three hundred pounds which I had occasionally borrowed from a Greek whose name was Petros. This man was originally a native of the island of Rhodes, which he must have left early, for he was not at this time much past thirty; he had been by trade a shoemaker. For what reason he left his own country I know not, but he was of a very pleasing figure and address, though very timid. Joas and the Iteghé very much distinguished him, and the king had made him Azeleffa el Camisha, which answers precisely to groom of the stole, or first lord of the bed-chamber in England. Being pliant, civil, and artful, and always well dressed, he had gained the good graces of the whole court; he was also

rich, as the king was generous, and his perquisites not inconsiderable.

After the campaign of Mariam Barea, when the dwarf was shot who was standing before Ras Michael, and the palace set on fire in the fray which followed, the crown, which was under Petros's charge, was melted; the gold, indeed, that it consisted of, was afterwards found, but there was said to have been on the top of it a pearl, or jewel, of immense price and size, larger than a pigeon's egg; and this, whatever it was, had disappeared, being in all probability consumed by the fire. Ras Michael, on the contrary, believed that it had been taken out by Petros with a view to sell it, and for this reason he had constantly refused him liberty to leave Abyssinia, and had kept him always in fear that some day or other he would strip him of all that he had saved. While Michael was besieging the mountain Haramat, Petros beseeched me to take L. 300 of him, and give him my first, second, and third bill of exchange upon Messrs Julian and Rosa, my correspondents at Cairo, payable a month after sight, to the Maronite Bishop of Mount Sinai, after which he set out for his own country, *in formâ pauperis*, and thereby escaped the rapacity of both Ras Michael and the Naybe of Masuah. As for the bill, it came duly to hand, and was paid to the bishop, who would very fain have received for each of the duplicates, and was near being bastinado'd for insisting upon this before the Bey at Cairo.

A bill

A bill drawn from Gondar is a very great curiosity when arrived in London ; it should be now upon the file in the shop of my very worthy and honourable friends the Messrs Drummond and Company at Charing-Cross. It was the only piece of writing of any kind which found its way to its intended destination, though many had been written by me on different occasions which presented for Arabia ; so that I will recommend to all travellers, for the future, to tack bills of exchange to their letters of greatest consequence, as a sure method of preventing their miscarriage.

I had made a shew, and with some degree of ostentation, of sending my gold chain to Cairo by the hands of Metical Aga's servant, declaring always that it was the only piece of Abyssinian gold I should carry out of the country, which I was to leave, both in fact and appearance, a *pauper*. Mules are the only beasts for carriage commonly used in Abyssinia, though bulls and cows, of a particular kind, are bought for the purpose by carriers, merchants, and such like, in that country, especially near the mines or quarries of salt ; they are very slow, however, and capable of no great burden, though very easily maintained. I had abundance of mules of my own for carrying my instruments and baggage, and the king and Iteghé furnished me with others for my own riding. I had, besides, two favourite horses, which I intended to attempt to carry home, foolishly enough ; for though I thought in my own

mind that I was sufficiently informed of, and prepared for all sorts of hardships, I had not foreseen the hundredth part of the difficulties and dangers that were then awaiting me.

On the 6th of August messengers came from Fasil, and the day after from Powussen, Begemder, Gojam, Damot, and Maitsha, which provinces, by their deputies, desired that Gusho might be set at liberty. This the king agreed to, but upon condition that the Ras should instantly pay him 1000 ounces of gold, and 500 musquets, which, on the other side, was as positively refused. Upon this Gusho was put into close confinement, and heavier irons than before: and, what was the most unjust, his two sons, who had left their own country to assist their father in distress, were confined in chains with him. All these violent measures were attributed to Ayabdar, Biletana Gueta Tecla, Guebra Mascall, and Basba Hezekias, officers connected with Ras Michael, whom the king had permitted to return from Tigré, and very much confided in their councils.

On the other hand, Adera Tacca Georgis, (the king's Fit-Auraris) and Guebra Wellela Yafous, principal people in Maitsha, and whom Fasil had put about the king, desired leave to retire to their own country, from which it is probable they will never again return to Gondar, unless as enemies.

Although the king still obstinately insisted that the Ras should pay him his thousand ounces of
3 gold,

gold, and five hundred musquets, as a price for his being set at liberty, this was refused by Gussho, in terms that shewed he was not now, as formerly, afraid of the king's power. On the other hand, the king proclaimed Kefla Yasous governor of the province of Tigré, with the same extent of command as Ras Michael had enjoyed it; and he was already there, and had taken upon him the government of that province. At the same time the king superseded Gussho, and deprived him of his province of Amhara, which was given to his nephew Ayto Adigo, son of Palambaras Durrie, a man of very great interest and property in the province; after which he immediately left Gondar and took his way through Begemder; but at the very entrance into Amhara, he was defeated by a son of Gussho who was expecting him; his troops were dispersed, and his brother, Ayto Aderesson, (the man who lost Gussho's horse at the battle of Tedda) wounded and taken prisoner.

There remained no longer any doubt that, as soon as the rains were over, the former scenes of bloodshed and confusion were to be acted over again; for, by appointing Kefla Yasous to the government of Tigré, and Ayto Adigo to that of Amhara, and the peaceable passage given to this young nobleman through Begemder, in order to supplant his uncle Gussho, by the great confidence shewn by the king in the old officers and relations of Ras Michael, now at Gondar, and the dismissal of Fasil's friends, (Adera Tacca Georgi
and

and Confu Adam) the most ample confession possible was made, that the king had again thrown himself into the arms of the province of Tigré and Begemder united, to which Amhara was to be added, by keeping Gussho prisoner, till such time as his nephew Adigo could gain entire possession.

To counterpoise this, a messenger arrived from Fasil, demanding privately of the king, that Gussho should be set at liberty, and return to his province of Amhara; that Lika Netcho, one of the murderers of Joas, (who had been spared, as being married to a relation of the king) should be immediately put to death, and that all the officers belonging to Ras Michael, then at court, should be banished for ever to Tigré, their native country. The king returned a positive refusal, not qualified in any shape whatever.

A disagreement now happened, which, more than all the rest, was interesting, and disturbed me in particular. Positive information was brought to the Iteghé, and, I believe, very authentic, that the king, weary of the many councils held at Koscam by the servants and deputies of the several parties, in the queen's presence, (to which he was not called) had determined to give up the palace of Koscam, in which it was thought there were great riches, to be plundered by his soldiers. As the death of the queen by her confinement in some distant desert and unwholesome convent, must have probably been the consequence of success on one part, to an immediate revolution, and the

the death of the king, was certainly to follow the miscarriage on the other, that is, should he be defeated in, or after making the attempt.

Troops, headed by Engedan, Ayto Confu, and by Mammo, and all the Iteghé's relations, now crowded into Koscam, into which great plenty of provisions was also carried. The wall was high and strong, the gates lately put into good repair, the tower, or castle, within in perfect good order; the Iteghé had not surrendered her fire-arms, and all the inhabitants around, especially the poorer sort, were firmly attached to her, as in times of distress and famine her charity afforded them a constant refuge.

Since the Iteghé had returned, I always lived at Koscam by her own desire, as her health was very precarious since her residence in Gojam. This suited my intention of withdrawing privately, and therefore, not to multiply the number of leave-takings, I had seen Gulsho but once, and that for a moment, and Ayabdar not at all, so that my whole attendance was now between the king and queen. The king had denied publicly his intention of plundering Koscam, but in a manner not at all satisfactory to the Iteghé; I ventured therefore to mention it to him one day when he was alone, on which he said, "I would not do it for your sake, Yagoube, were there no other reason; but my mother (meaning the Iteghé) is ill-advised, and worse informed."

On

On the 13th of October, Powuffen, with a very considerable army, and without any previous intimation, arrived at Koscam, his head-quarters all the last campaign. He continued there till the 22d of the same month, and then decamped, passing by Gondar, without entering it; he came to Ras Gusho's house, under the hill of Koscam, where he had several interviews with the king and Iteghé, to what purport was never known; but it probably was to endeavour some reconciliation between the king and queen, and this was effected a few days afterwards (at least in appearance) by Ayabdar, and some of the great men at Gondar, after which Powuffen returned to Begemder. For my part, I neither desired nor obtained an interview; I saw that the storm was ready to break, and I was taking the most speedy and effectual way to be out of the sphere of its action.

On the 12th of November, all Gondar was struck with a panic at the news brought in by the peasants from the country, flying for refuge to the capital, destitute of every thing, and thankful only they had escaped with life. Fasil had marched with a considerable army from Ibaba, and advanced to Dingleber in peace, when he left the main body, under the conduct of Wellela Yafous, and all his baggage, considering that place as the limits of his government. He marched from this, without taking for himself two changes of raiment, at the head of 700 horse, the most wild and desperate banditti that ever were introduced into
any

any unfortunate country. With these he burnt every village and every church between Dingleber and Sar-Ohha, murdered every male, without distinction of priest or layman; killed every woman past the age of child-bearing, and gave the others as slaves to the wild Pagan Galla whom he had with him. In short, he just indulged that body of men in the same enormities that they themselves exercise in the inroads they make into countries unhappy enough to be their neighbours in time of war. The whole country of Degwassa, the district which Aclog commanded, was totally destroyed; men, women, and children, were entirely extirpated, without distinction of age or sex; the houses all razed to the ground, and the country about it left as desolate as after the deluge. The villages belonging to the king were as severely treated; an universal cry was heard from every part, but no one dared to suggest any means of help; parties were so entirely mixed and confounded, that no one could safely enter into any confidence with his neighbour; but the common people who had little to lose, began again to cry out for the return and government of Ras Michael.

Fasil, having given the king this sample of what he was capable of doing, halted at Sar-Ohha, and from thence sent a peremptory demand that Gussho should be at liberty. His messenger was a crooked, diminutive dwarf, called Dohho, of whom I have already spoken. It was a very bad sign of a treaty
when

when such a one was the manager. He upbraided the king in terms scarcely decent, with the protection, life, and kingdom the Ras Fasil had given him, when the contrary was absolutely in his power. He asked the king if he knew who had protected him the night of the retreat from the hill of Serbraxos? and told him, in plain terms, that, being entirely void of the noble principles of gratitude himself, he had forced him, Fasil, to be wanting to the next great virtue, that of hospitality, in suffering a man of Gusho's quality to be made prisoner after arriving within the limits of his government. He concluded, by telling the king plainly, that, unless he restored Gusho to his liberty and government, without condition, he would, in three days, make Gondar, the metropolis, as desert and destitute of inhabitants as he had left the paltry district of Deg-wassa.

The king received all this with great composure, for he had as much fortitude, and as little fear as ever fell to the share of any man; his misfortune, however, was, that he had no resources in which he could trust; and the Tigré officers about him, more imprudent, and fully as fearless as he, gave him the same advices they would have done had he been at the head of the army. Ras Michael was moreover gone, and Kessa Yafous was at a distance; these two were the men for planning and contriving business, and who saved others the trouble of thinking. The rest, such

as Billetana Gueta Tecla, Guebra Mascal, and Basba Hezekias, were only fit to be trusted with execution, and to proceed according to the letter of the orders they might receive, and the consequences of which they could not, nor did they wish to understand. By being used, however, to constant success in executing plans maturely digested by wiser heads, they had acquired a degree of presumption which made them very dangerous counsellors to a young king, in the present case, where nothing but the greatest prudence, assisted by the manifest interposition of the hand of Heaven, (many examples of which he had already proved) could save him from perdition.

I was not present at the audience, being at Koscam, but his secretary, to whom I am indebted for every thing that passed in private, in this history, and which otherwise was beyond the reach of my knowledge, assured me the king answered these threatenings without any change of countenance or language, and in very few words: "Tell Kasmati Fasil from me, that what I am obliged to do by the rules of justice, is not to be measured either by his inclination or power to do wrong. Men have crucified their Saviour; and many kings in this country (better men than I am) have been, in various manners, slain by their deluded subjects. The race of Solomon, however, God has preserved till this day on the throne, where I am now sitting, while

while nothing but the memory of those who oppressed them remains loaded with the curses of mankind. I am king of this country, and have often been acknowledged as such by Kasmati Fasil. I will not give up Gulsho, but at my own time, if ever; nor can he insist upon it, consistently with the duty of a subject to his sovereign." Noble words these, had he been at the head of an army to enforce them.

This message was quickly conveyed to Fasil, who was advanced to Azazo, where it met him, and he continued his march without halting till he came to Abba Samuel, about two miles from Gondar. It was on the 13th of November that his army made a shew of encamping at Abba Samuel, for there was not above six tents pitched, and next day, the 14th, by eight in the morning, a drum and trumpet, guarded by about a hundred horse, came immediately under the town to the banks of the river Kahha, where the trumpet having sounded three times, and the kettle-drum beat as often, it was proclaimed, That all manner of persons, of what degree soever, whether servants of the palace, or others, should instantly leave Gondar as they regarded their lives; and if any staid after this warning, their blood should be upon their own head. The whole town, therefore, in an instant was deserted, and very few, even of his own servants, remained with the king. I had already once partaken of a similar scene, and
found

found it of the most disagreeable kind; Providence spared me, however, this repetition of it, as I was at Koscam, and determined to be retired there so perfectly, that I did not stir out of my apartment till night, when the gates were locked, and the guards placed.

On the 15th, the king released Ras Gusho from his confinement, who immediately went to the camp to Fasil; and next day, at night, he returned, and had an audience at the palace with the king, and again retired to sleep at Abba Samuel. On the 17th, a little before noon, Fasil came to the palace for an audience, but first took possession of every avenue leading to it; a strong guard was also placed in the antichamber, and the charge of the door of the king's presence-chamber was taken from the king's ordinary black servants, and given to Confu Adam, who mounted guard there with about twenty wild Galla. What further passed I did not strictly inquire, being exceedingly distressed, by the bad prospect that presented itself, and firmly resolved to take no further part. In general, however, I understood, that all was humiliation: and Fasil having announced to the king that he had given his daughter to Gusho in marriage, to him the king gave Gojam, and restored the province of Amhara. Aclog was condemned to find security for 1200 ounces of gold, which was said to be the sum Gusho had with him when taken.

The

The king was to restore to the Iteghé the whole of her villages that she had ever enjoyed, from the time of Bacuffa, her husband, to that present moment. To Fasil, were given Damot, Maitsha, and Agow, and to Confu Adam, Ibaba Azage; and, for the greater solemnity, the king and Fasil took a formal oath, to ratify all these articles, and to remain in friendship for ever. After which, the Abuna, in pontificals, being called to be present, pronounced a formal curse and sentence of excommunication, upon whichever of the parties should first break the vow they had taken.

No word was mentioned of Tigré, or Kessa Yafous, or of Powussen, nor the smallest notice taken of Ras Ayabdar, who remained in his house and office, as if he had not existed. It appeared to me the party was again made by one half of the kingdom against the other; Kessa Yafous and Powussen against Fasil and Gulho; as for Ayabdar and Ayto Tesfos of Samen, these were left, contemptuously *in medio*, to take any side they pleased, which, indeed, was of no consequence. After this interview, Fasil never again entered the king's house, though he went so often to Koscam; but I neither saw him nor sought to see him, nor did he ever inquire after me, as far as I could learn.

On the 19th of November Fasil sent orders to the palace, that four bodies of the king's household-troops, Gimja Bet, Werk Sacala, Ambaselé, and Edjow, should immediately join him, which they did, to the number of 1200 men, all armed.

These

These he carried, with Gusbo his son-in-law, in triumph to Damot, nor was this the only instance Fasil gave of the great regard he had to his late oaths, and to the sacred character of the person that administered them; for the morning he marched off, a party of the Galla, meeting the Abuna, and a numerous retinue mounted on mules, going to the king's house, obliged them all to dismount at once, without distinction, taking their mules with them to the camp, from whence they never returned, and leaving the Abuna on foot, to find his way back to his house, at Kedus Raphael, from the top of which, as from a castle, he wisely poured out his excommunications, against an army, composed entirely of Pagans, without one Christian among them.

It is here a proper period to finish the history of Abyssinia, as I was no further present at, or informed of the public transactions which followed. My whole attention was now taken up in preparations for my return through the kingdom of Sennaar and the desert. Neither shall I take up the reader's time with a long narrative of leave-taking, or what passed between me and those illustrious personages with whom I had lived so long in the most perfect and cordial friendship. Men of little, and envious minds, would perhaps think I was composing a panegyric upon myself, from which, therefore, I most willingly refrain. But the several marks of goodness, friendship, and esteem, which I received at parting, are confined
within

within my own breast, where they never shall be effaced, but continue to furnish me with the most agreeable reflections, since they were the fruit alone of personal merit, and of honest, steady, and upright behaviour. All who had attempted the same journey hitherto, had met with disappointment, disgrace, or death; for my part, although I underwent every sort of toil, danger, and all manner of hardship, yet these were not confined to myself. I suffered always honourably, and in common with the rest of the state; and when sun-shiny days happened, (for sun-shiny days there were, and very brilliant ones too) of these I was permitted freely to partake; and the most distinguished characters, both at court and in the army, were always ready to contribute as far as possible, to promote what they thought or saw was the object of my pursuits or entertainment.

I shall only here mention what passed at the last interview I had with the Iteghé, two days before my departure. Tensa Christos, who was one of the chief priests of Gondar, was a native of Gojam, and consequently of the low church, or a follower of Abba Eustathius, in other words, as great an enemy as possible to the Catholic, or as they will call it, *the religion of the Franks*. He was, however, reputed a person of great probity and sanctity of manners, and had been on all occasions rather civil and friendly to me when we met, though evidently not desirous of any intimate connections or friendship; and as I, on my
part,

part, expected little advantage from connecting myself with a man of his principles, I very willingly kept at all possible distance ; that I might run no risk of disobliging him was my only aim.

This priest came often to the Iteghè's and Ayto Aylo's, with both of whom he was much in favour, and here I now happened to meet him, when I was taking my leave in the evening. I beg of you, says he, Yagoube, as a favour, to tell me, now you are immediately going away from this country, and you can answer me without fear, Are you really a Frank, or are you not ? Sir, said I, I do not know what you mean by fear ; I should as little decline answering you any question you have to ask had I ten years to stay, as now I am to quit this country to-morrow : I came recommended, and was well received by the king and Ras Michael : I neither taught nor preached ; no man ever heard me say a word about my particular mode of worship ; and as often as my duty has called me, I have never failed to attend divine service as it is established in this country. What is the ground of fear that I should have, while under the king's protection, and when I conform in every shape to the laws, religion, and customs of Abyssinia ? True, says Tensa Christos, I do not say you should be alarmed ; whatever your faith is I would defend you myself ; the Iteghé knows I always spoke well of you, but will you gratify an old man's curiosity, in telling me

whether or not you really are a Frank, Catholic, or Jesuit ?

I have too great a regard, replied I, to request of a man, so truly good and virtuous as you, not to have answered you the question at whatever time you could have asked me ; and I now declare to you, by the word of a Christian, that my countrymen and I are more distant in matters of religion, from those you call Catholics, Jesuits, or Franks, than you and your Abyssinians are ; and that a priest of my religion, preaching in any country subject to those Franks, would as certainly be brought to the gallows as if he had committed murder, and just as speedily as you would stone a Catholic priest preaching here in the midst of Gondar. They do precisely by us as you do by them, so they have no reason to complain. And, says he, don't you do the same to them ? No, replied I ; every man in our country is allowed to serve God in his own way ; and as long as their teachers confine themselves to what the sacred books have told them, they can teach no ill, and therefore deserve no punishment. No religion, indeed, teaches a man evil, but when forgetting this, they preach against government, curse the king, absolve his subjects from allegiance, or incite them to rebellion, as being lawful, the sword of the civil power cuts them off, without any blame falling upon their religion, because these things were done in contradiction to what their priests,

priests, from the scripture, should have taught them were truly the tenets of that very religion.

The Iteghé now interposed : What do you think, Tenfa Christos, if Yagoube is not a priest, should he not be one? Madam, says he, I have one question more to inquire of him, and that shall be all, nor would I ask if he was not going away to-morrow. It is an unfair one then, said I, but out with it ; I cannot suffer in the opinion of good men, by answering directly a question which you put to me out of curiosity. It seems then, says he, you are not a Frank, but you think your own religion a better one than theirs, you are not of our religion, however, for you say we are nearer the Catholics than you ; now what objection have you to our religion, and what is your opinion of it?

As far as I am informed, said I, I think well of it ; it is the ancient Greek church, under St. Athanasius, successor to St. Mark, in the chair of Alexandria. This being the case, you cannot have a better, as you have the religion nearest to that of the apostles, and, as I have before said, no religion teaches a man evil, much less can your religion give you such instruction, if you have not corrupted it ; and if you have, it is no longer the religion of St. Athanasius, or the Apostles, therefore liable to error. And now, Tenfa Christos, let me ask you two questions ; you are in no fear of answering, neither are you in danger, though not about to leave the country. Does your

religion permit you to marry one sister, to divorce her, and marry the other, and then, keeping the aunt, to marry the niece likewise? Does St. Athanasius teach you to marry one, two, or three wives, and divorce them as often as you please; to marry others, and then go back to the former again? No, replied he. Then as you do this daily, answered I, you certainly are not living in this one instance according to the religion of St. Athanasius. Now I ask you, If any priest, truly a Christian, from our parts, (not a Frank, but agreeing in every thing else with you,) was to preach against this, and some such like practices, frequently used in Abyssinia, could this priest live amongst you, or how would you treat him? Stone him to death, says Ayto Aylo, who was sitting by; stone him to death like a Frank, or a Jesuit; he should not live a week. Yagoube is hard upon me, continued Tensa Christos, turning to the Iteghé, but I am sorry to say with truth, I fear they never would abandon the flesh-pots of Egypt, their ancient inheritance, for the teaching of any priest, however perfect his religion might be, or pure his life, or however corrupt their manners. Then Tensa Christos, said I, do not be over sure but that shedding the blood of those Franks as you call them, may be criminal in the sight of God. As their religion has so far served them, as to prevent the practice of some horrid crimes, that are common here, yours hath not yet had that effect upon you; if you do not want
precept,

precept, perhaps you may example, these Franks are very capable of shewing you this last, and your own religion instructs you to imitate them.

All this time there was not the smallest noise in the room, in which above a hundred people were present; but, as I wished this conversation to go no further, and was afraid of some question about the Virgin Mary, I got up, and, passing to the other side of the room, I stood by Tenfa Christos, saying to him, And now, holy father, I have one, last favour to ask you, which is your forgiveness, if I have at any time offended you; your blessing, now that I am immediately to depart, if I have not; and your prayers while on my long and dangerous journey, through countries of Infidels and Pagans.

A hum of applause sounded all throughout the room. The Iteghé said something, but, what, I did not hear. Tenfa Christos was surprised apparently at my humility, which he had not expected, and cried out, with tears in his eyes, Is it possible, Yagoube, that you believe my prayers can do you any good? I should not be a Christian, as I profess to be, Father, replied I, if I had any doubt of the effect of good men's prayers. So saying, I stooped to kiss his hand, when he laid a small iron across upon my head, and, to my great surprise, instead of a benediction, repeated the Lord's prayer. I was afraid he would have kept me stooping till he should add the ten commandments likewise, when he concluded, "Gzier y' Bar

y' Baracuc," May God bless you. After which, I made my obeisance to the Iteghé, and immediately withdrew, it not being the custom, at public audience, to salute any one in the presence of the sovereign.

Twenty greasy monks, however, had placed themselves in my way as I went out, that they might have the credit of giving me the blessing likewise after Tensa Christos. As I had very little faith in the prayers of these drones, so I had some reluctance to kiss their greasy hands and sleeves; however running this disagreeable gauntlet, I gave them my blessing in English,—Lord send you all a halter, as he did to Abba Salama, (meaning the Acab Saat.) But they, thinking I was recommending them to the patriarch Abba Salama, pronounced at random, with great seeming devotion, their Amen,—So be it.

REGISTER

REGISTER

OF THE

QUANTITY OF RAIN-WATER,

IN INCHES AND DECIMALS,

WHICH FELL AT GONDAR, IN ABYSSYNIA, IN THE
YEAR 1770, THROUGH A FUNNEL OF ONE FOOT
ENGLISH IN DIAMETER.

The rain began this year on the first of March: } INCHES.
there fell in showers, that lasted only a few }
minutes, between the 1st March and the }
last of April, } .039

M A Y.

1. FROM the 1st to the 6th,	-	.039
From the 6th to the 8th,	-	.120
From the 10th to the 12th it rained chiefly		
in the night,	-	.711
From the 12th to the 14th,	-	.123
3		19. At

MAY.	INCHES.
19. At four in the afternoon a small shower, but heavy rain in the night, -	.526
21. At 7 o'clock in the evening a small shower, which continued moderately through the night, - - -	.171
27. At 6 in the evening heavy rain for an hour, -	.540
29. At 3 in the afternoon frequent showers of light rain. It continued one hour 30 minutes, - -	.487
Total rain in May,	2.717

J U N E.

1. At 12 noon, light rain for 15 minutes,	.028
2. Between 12 o'clock night it has rained 30 minutes, in small showers, which lasted 5 or 6 minutes at a time, -	.049
4. At eight in the morning slight showers for 30 minutes, - -	.014
5. Between 6 and 10 in the morning four small showers, that lasted 32 minutes, and at 12 a very gentle rain that lasted 15 minutes,	0.31
10. It has rained very violently for 6 hours 30 minutes, - -	.342
11. Between 2 and 6 in the afternoon, at three several times, it has rained 20 minutes,	.014
12. At noon a violent rain for one hour 30 minutes. At half past 1 in the afternoon light rain for an hour. At 4 afternoon, light rain for 30 minutes. At half past six same afternoon, a very gentle rain for 3 hours,	.421
13. Between	

JUNE.

INCHES.

13. Between 4 and 5 afternoon it rained twice for 15 minutes, but not perceptible in the recipient, - - -
16. Between 2 and 6 afternoon it has rained three times smart showers, in all about 20 minutes, - - .033
17. There fell in the night small rain for an hour, .002
18. At 1 afternoon there was a strong shower for 15 minutes. At half past 1 another for 45 minutes. Same day at 6 afternoon, it rained at intervals for 2 hours, - .750
19. At half after 2 afternoon it began to rain violently at intervals. At night a slight shower for 20 minutes, - .118
20. At twelve noon there was a very slight shower for 6 minutes. At half past 5, same day, a small shower that lasted 30 minutes. At 8 o'clock evening it began to rain smartly at intervals for 4 hours, - .171
21. At a quarter past 11 it rained violently with thunder and lightning for 2 hours. At half past 4 in the evening it rained, with intervals, in all about 45 minutes, - .330
22. At half past 12 noon, it rained an hour, .175
23. At one o'clock afternoon slight showers for 2 hours. Heavy rain in the night for 4 hours, - - - .358
25. At a quarter past one afternoon, a small shower, which lasted one hour 35 minutes. At night it rained one hour and 30 minutes; heavy rain with thunder and lightning, .552
26. At

JUNE.	INCHES.
26. At two in the afternoon, violent rain with intervals for 30 minutes. At half past five it rained for three hours, -	.233
27. At a quarter past twelve, a small shower for one hour 45 minutes, and at night a moderate shower, - -	.302
28. At half past twelve, a gentle rain. At 50 minutes after twelve, violent. At two in the afternoon very gentle rain for 15 minutes; and at 7, moderate rain for one hour and 30 minutes, -	.290
29. At 1 in the afternoon, light rain, but a heavy rain must have fallen somewhere else, as the river Kahha is overflowed, -	.092
30. At noon a very gentle rain for 15 minutes,	.002
Total rain in June,	4.307

J U L Y.

1. At 20 minutes past eleven, strong rain for 30 minutes, with some small showers through the night, - -	.306
2. At half past eleven, a small shower for 30 minutes, and then, at twelve, a violent shower, wind south-west, for 45 minutes,	.792
3. It rained at four in the afternoon, and in the night, - - -	.311
4. It rained from twelve to two, and in the night likewise, - -	.390
5. It rained at noon, and some in the night,	.029
7. It	

JULY.	INCHES.
7. It rained and hailed violently. It rained in the night likewise, - - -	1.686
8. Light rain in the night, - - -	.038
9. Light rain for a few minutes, and no more all day; but the river Kahha has suddenly overflowed, and there is appearance of rain on the Mountain of the Sun, - - -	.017
10. No rain, - - -	—
11. Ditto, - - -	—
12. At half an hour past noon it rained violently, - - -	.422
13. Violent rain at mid-day, and also in the night - - -	1.185
14. A few light showers night and day, - - -	.054
15. A small shower in the evening, and another in the night, - - -	.251
16. No rain, - - -	—
17. A small shower at one in the afternoon, and flying showers throughout the day. It rained at ten at night violently - - -	.658
18. A gentle shower at noon, but continued raining in the night, - - -	.463
19. Light showers all the night, - - -	.237
20. It rained all night till eight o'clock next morning, - - -	.714
21. Light showers in the afternoon, but violent rain in the night, - - -	1.329
22. Light showers in the evening, - - -	.174
23. It rained one shower at half past ten in the morning, - - -	.107
24. Light showers night and day, - - -	.226
25. Light rains and frequent, - - -	.015
26. Light showers throughout the evening, - - -	.081
27. Light rains, - - -	.148
28. Flying showers, - - -	.070
29. Ditto	

JULY.	INCHES.
29. Ditto, - - -	.081
30. Light showers, - -	.013
31. Flying light showers night and day, -	.292
Total rain in July,	10.089

A U G U S T.

1. Light rain in the afternoon, -	.056
2. It rained in the night smartly, -	.329
3. It rained at noon violently, -	1.318
4. It rained from mid-day to evening, and some showers in the night. -	1.723
5. At 2 in the afternoon it began to rain violently for 2 hours, - -	1.042
6. Smart showers at different times in the evening and night, - -	.490
7. It rained in the night, - -	.580
8. Light rain in the night, - -	.053
9. Flying showers through the day, but for 6 minutes. Evening very violent,	.186
10. Smart showers in the evening and night,	.342
11. & 12. Frequent showers with a high wind,	1.184
13 & 14. Light rain the first day, but violent on the second, - -	1.423
15. Fair all day, but rained at night, -	.475
16. Flying showers night and day, - -	.144
17. A very violent shower of short duration,	.371
18. & 19. Several small showers, -	.609
20. & 21. Frequent light showers, -	.236
22. & 23. Constant rain, - -	1.502
24. Frequent showers in the evening, -	.306
25. & 26.	

(765)

AUGUST.	INCHES.
25. & 26. Constant rain,	1.763
27. Frequent showers,	.289
28. Ditto,	.280
29. It rained in the night,	.355
30. Ditto,	.302
31. Ditto,	.211
Total rain in August,	15.569

S E P T E M B E R.

1. It rained in the night,	.079
2. Ditto,	.107
3. & 4. Frequent showers night and day,	.358
5. & 6. Ditto,	.568
7. It rained in the night only,	.213
8. No rain,	
9. It rained violently for a few minutes at 8 in the evening,	.055
10. No rain,	
11. It rained in the night only,	.227
12. It rained smartly in the night,	.566
13. No rain,	
14. Light showers in the day,	.042
15. Frequent showers night and day,	.159
16. It rained a little in the night,	.132
18. No rain,	
19. Ditto,	
20. Flying showers night and day	.263
21. No rain,	
22. Ditto,	
23. Some	

SEPTEMBER.	INCHES.
23. Some rain in the night,	.039
24. Ditto,	.026
25. The rain ceased,	—
Total rain in September,	
	2.834

N. B. This is the festival of the Crofs in Egypt, when the inundation begins to abate. It rains no more in Abyffinia till towards the beginning of November, and then only for a few days; but these are the rains Abyffinia cannot want for their latter crops, and it was for these the Agows prayed when we were at the fountains of the Nile the 5th of November 1770.

S T A T E

S T A T E

O F T H E

Q U A N T I T Y O F R A I N - W A T E R ,

WHICH FELL IN ABYSSINIA AT KOSCAM, THE QUEEN'S
PALACE, IN 1771, DURING THE RAINY MONTHS.

*THROUGH A FUNNEL OF ONE FOOT ENGLISH IN DIA-
METER, AS IN THE PRECEDING YEAR 1770.*

F E B R U A R Y .

	INCHES.
23. THIS day it rained, for the first time from a quarter before four o'clock afternoon to half past four ditto, -	.003
28. It rained in the night one hour and a quarter,	.001

M A R C H .

4. It rained in the night near two hours small rain, - -	.042
7. It rained a small shower in the evening,	.014
12. It rained three quarters of an hour this after- noon, - - -	.017
24. It	

MARCH.

INCHES.

24. It rained and hailed violently for 18 minutes in the night,	- -	.017
29. It rained an hour and a half in the afternoon,		.066
30. It rained hard in the night,	- -	.504
Total rain in February and March,		.664

A P R I L.

3.	It rained, or rather hailed, nine minutes,	—
5.	It rained an hour in the afternoon,	.067
8.	Small rain at intervals throughout the after- noon, - - - -	.002
10.	It rained an hour in the night, -	.003
30.	It rained one hour and a quarter in the night,	.013
Total rain in April,		.085

M A Y.

1. From the 31st ult. to this day, at different times,	- - -	.330
3. It rained hard in the night,	-	.355
6. It has rained violently since three in the after- noon, wind S. E. variable,	-	.095
7. It has rained heavily in the night, wind vary- ing from N. to S. and S. W.	-	.368
8. It rained small rain in the afternoon,		.042
11. It has rained small rain this afternoon, wind N. W.	- - -	.002
14. It has rained since yesterday at three all night, and till noon to-day,	-	.675
27. From		

MAY.

INCHES.

27. From yesterday at two P. M. it rained to half past six, and heavily most part of the night, wind varying from N. to S. .634

Total rain in May, 2.501

J U N E.

1. From yesterday at noon, in the night, and this day, wind W. S. W. - .212
3. At night, south, - - .002
5. It rained in the night, S. W. - .223
6. Ditto, - - .006
9. It rained in the night and afternoon, wind W. by S. - - .725
10. Ditto, - - .463
11. It rained in the night, - - .343
13. It rained from the 12th, at noon, to the 13th at ten, S. S. W. - - 1.265
14. It rained from three till seven, - .120
15. It rained last night from sun-set till midnight, S. - - .160
- N. B. The 16th at night, is the day the Egyptians say the Nile ferments, and is troubled, by falling of the nocta.
18. After three days fair, wind fresh, N. it began to rain yesterday, and rained three quarters of an hour, wind varying from north to west, - - .490
19. It rained with intervals from four to ten last night, wind north, varying by east to south, and south-west, where it fell calm, and rained violently, - - .530

JUNE.	INCHES.
20. It rained from a quarter before six, till ten at night, wind at north, fresh; changed to east, then to south, and there fell calm; violent thunder and lightning, -	.635
21. It began to rain yesterday at three, and rained till near five; wind changed from north to south, and fell calm; cleared with wind at north, -	.550
22. It began to rain at three, and rained till five; wind changed from north to east, then to south, and fell calm; cleared with wind at north; fair all night, -	.149
25. It has been fair till yesterday evening: at three it began raining, and rained till five this morning, a few drops; wind north, -	.067
26. It rained small rain at several times yesterday afternoon, and a few drops this morning, wind N. calm; at ten it came to south and then to west, -	.120
27. It rained yesterday afternoon from four to five; wind changed from north to west, but speedily returned to north, fresh, -	.054
28. & 29. It rained the 27th in the afternoon and in the night, wind at north. Yesterday it rained small rain all day till five, and cleared in the night, with wind at north, -	.268
Total rain in June,	6.388

J U L Y.

1. There fell small showers the night of the 29th and of the 30th, -	.093
3	3- There

JULY.

INCHES.

3. There fell a small shower the second in the afternoon, and last night hard, - .267
4. It rained (small rain at noon. From two, and all night, heavy and constant rain. It thundered from noon till three, .373
5. It rained all yesterday afternoon, and by intervals, till nine at night. Small rain this morning; calm; W. S. W. and S. W. .423
6. It rained yesterday afternoon and in the night; S. W. - - - .489

N. B. The 6th of July is the first of the month Hamlic, and of the Egyptian month Abib. It is this day they first begin to cry the Nile's increase in the streets of Cairo. The night before, or 30th of Senne, is called at Cairo the Eide el Bishaara, or the eve of good news, because, after having measured at the Mikeas, they come and tell at Cairo that to-morrow they begin to count the Nile's rising.

7. It rained from two in the afternoon till four, and from ten till midnight, .318
10. It rained yesternight, and in the afternoon and night the day before, - .289
11. It rained till yesterday afternoon: in the night a violent shower that lasted 39 minutes; wind south by west, - - - 1.162
12. It rained a little from two to three in the afternoon, but in the night violently for a short time, - - - .319
13. It rained yesterday from three quarters past twelve till midnight; W. S. W. calm, .912
14. It rained all yesterday afternoon till midnight, .739
15. It

JULY	INCHES.
15. It rained the 14th in the afternoon, and the 15th a few showers through the day,	.816
16. It rained in the night, and small rain in the afternoon, - -	.290
17. It rained in the afternoon two showers, and in the night a little; S. W. -	.212
19. It rained in the afternoon the 17th and 18th, and the 18th only in the night,	.912
20. It rained yesterday from two till half past ten constant rain, and the hail lay all the afternoon on the hills S. E. of the town; very cold wind; S. by W. -	1.371
21. & 22. It rained but one small shower the 20th, the 21st it rained little in the afternoon, but hard in the night, -	1.185
24. It rained in the morning of yesterday only, fair in the afternoon; to-day, in the morning, fair in the night, -	.766
25. It rained all yesterday afternoon, and all this morning small rain, but none in the night, - -	.452
28. From the 25th in the afternoon to this day at noon, - -	2.137
29. From the 28th at noon to the 29th it rained in the first part of the night, but was fair all afternoon and this morning,	.267
From the 29th at noon, to the 31st at ditto,	.568
Total rain in July,	14.360

AUGUST.

A U G U S T.

1. It rained yesterday afternoon, but in the night little. To day fair,	-	.544
4. It rained only the third in the evening, and night and this morning,	-	1.188
5. It rained yesterday evening and in the night till noon little,	- -	.544
6. It rained yesterday afternoon, and all night, and a little this morning,	-	.250
8. It was fair these two days, and only rained one hard shower last night,	-	.178
9. It rained last night only, was fair all day, and is this morning,	- -	.214
10. It rained yesterday all the afternoon, and the first of the night. To-day fair,		.869
11. It rained in the night yesterday; all day and this morning fair,	- -	.188
12. It rained a small shower yesterday afternoon, and in the night a little,	-	.268
13. It rained yesterday at three a hard shower, and a little in the night,	- -	.308
14. It rained a few drops in the day, and a hard shower at night,	- -	.360
15. It rained a hard shower near three, and at ten at night,	- -	.386
16. In the night,	- -	.027
17. It rained hard several times in the evening and night,	- - -	.831
18. It rained hard yesterday afternoon, and in the night,	- - -	.329
19. It		

AUGUST.	INCHES.
19. It rained all day, but not hard,	- .491
20. It rained in the afternoon only,	- .010
21. It rained in the afternoon only,	- .097
22. It was fair all yesterday, and rained only a hard shower at 9,	- - .424
20. It rained hard at noon, and the evening, with little intervals, till 9 at night, and again this morning at sun-rise till 7,	1.148
24. It did not rain yesterday,	- —
25. It rained an hour between two and three,	.332
26. It rained a small shower yesterday, and none in the night,	- - .005
27. It rained a hard shower at four, and this day 12 morning, the night clear,	- .268
28. It rained hard yesterday at 2 for a few mi- nutes,	- - .201
29. It rained a hard shower for near an hour, after two, but clear all night and this morning,	- - .450
30. & 31. It rained a small shower the 30th, and heavily for a quarter of an hour the 31st, at night, at ten,	- - .109
Total rain in August,	10.019

S E P T E M B E R.

2. It rained yesterday a hard shower in the even- ing, and at ten at night,	- .664
3. It rained only a few drops, which did not ap- pear in the funnel,	- —

4. It

SEPTEMBER.

INCHES.

4. It rained froth noon till sun-set yesterday,
with hard and violent thunder: night
fair, - - - 1.739
- N. B. It is observed at Gondar, the
Pagomen is always rainy. It begins this
year the 4th, and consists of six days, being
Leap year,
5. It rained yesterday all afternoon, small rain, .399
6. It rained yesterday all afternoon, and small
rain in the night till ten, - .306
7. It rained from before noon till four, small
rain; the night fair. Wind high at
north, - - - .846
8. It rained from noon for an hour, small rain, .214
9. It rained a small shower at noon; clouds
drive from east to west; wind north, .107
10. Saint John's day, no rain, - —
11. It rained from noon till five o'clock, wind
W. cold; clouds drive from east and
west, - - - 1.135
12. It rained a smart shower a little before
noon. Clouds drive from east and from
west, - - - .214
13. It rained a small shower a little after noon.
Cold and calm. Clouds drive from east and
west, - - - .035
14. It rained small rain from noon to three, and
hard from eleven till near midnight, .344
15. It was fair all yesterday, but rained hard for
a few minutes at seven, and also a little
before midnight, from the east, .186
16. No rain to-day, - —
18. It rained a small shower last night, and to-day
at noon, - - - .053
19. It

SEPTEMBER.

INCHES.

19. It rained and hailed violently in the after-
noon.

1.096

Total rain in September,

7.338

The rain totally ceased the 19th, none having fallen from this day to the 25th.

Saint John's day is the time observed for the rains beginning to abate.

N. B. At the 5th of October the people were all crying for rain; the ground all in cracks, and tuff in the blade burnt up.

1.096	September
1.096	August
1.096	July
1.096	June
1.096	May
1.096	April
1.096	March
1.096	February
1.096	January
7.338	TOTAL

**TOTAL of RAIN that fell in ABYSSINIA in the
Years 1770 and 1771, in the Rainy Months.**

G O N D A R.

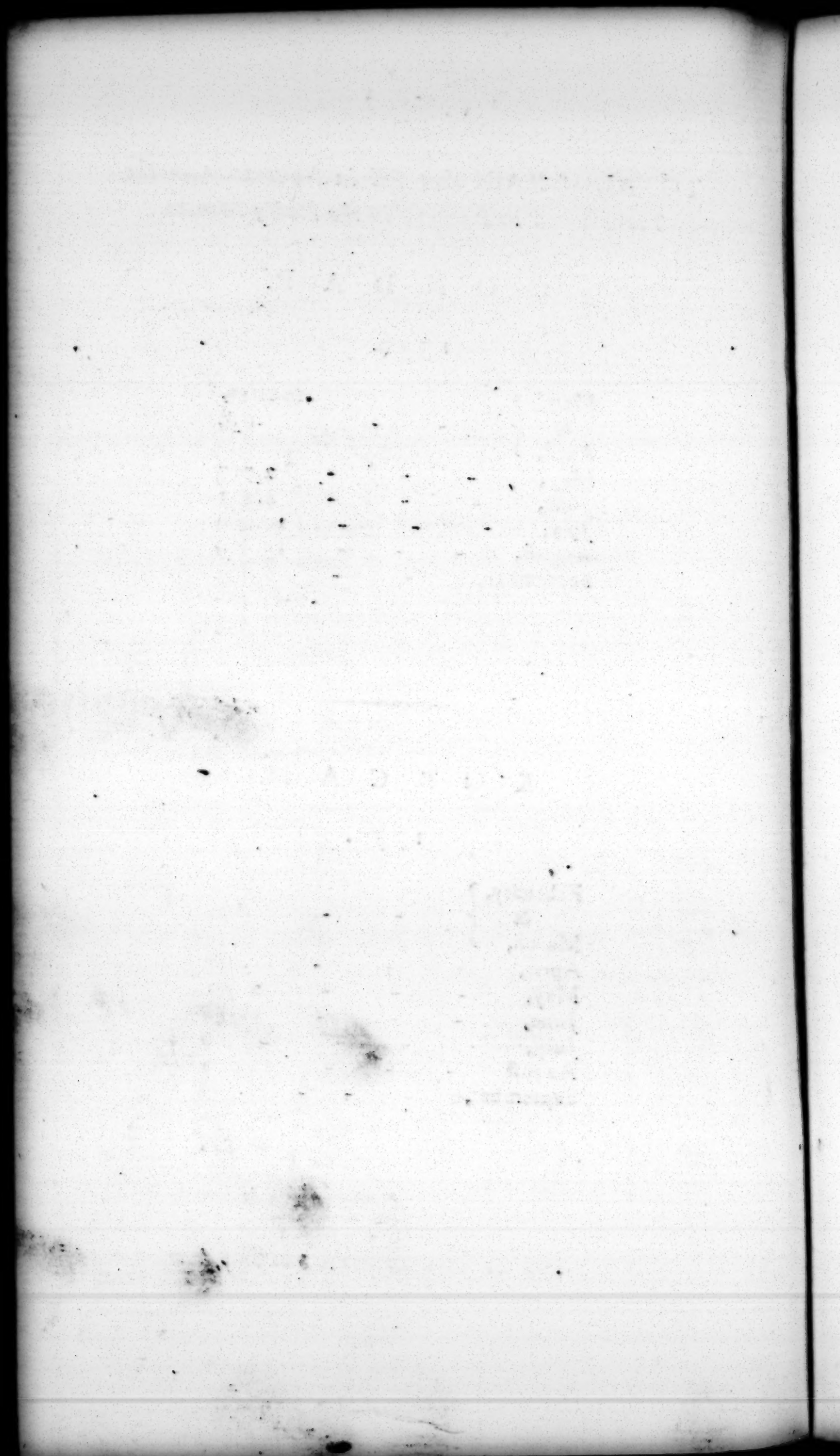
1770.

				.INCHES.
March } & April, }	-	-	-	.039
May,	-	-	-	2.717
June,	-	-	-	4.307
July,	-	-	-	10.089
August,	-	-	-	15.569
September,	-	-	-	2.834
				35.555

K O S C A M.

1771.

February, } & March, }	-	-	-	.664
April,	-	-	-	.085
May,	-	-	-	2.501
June,	-	-	-	6.388
July,	-	-	-	14.360
August	-	-	-	10.019
September,	-	-	-	7.338
				41.355



FIRST BATTLE.

Explanation.

1. King's palace and high walls surrounding it.
2. Ashoa, public place where the troops assembled, and gunpowder is sold, and where public executions are made.
3. Hamar Noh, Noah's Ark, a church.
4. A close quarter over a precipice on the West, to which the merchants carry their effects upon sudden revolutions, especially those that have flour and provisions.
5. Abbo where the Romish priests were stoned and lye unburied.
6. Debra Berhan, famous church upon the highest part of the hill over the Angrab.
7. Riggobee Ber, or Pigeons Pals, a rocky part of the town, fortified in time of troubles.
8. Abbo, great street, called from the church and saint of that name.
9. Miahometan town on the river Kaha.
10. King's palace on the river Kaha.
11. Brook of St. Raphael.
12. The river Angrab.

A The centre commanded by the king and Guebra Christos encamped on the South of the hill Serbraxos.

B Ras Michael, who leads the van, encamped upon the South East, and highest part of the hill.

C Kessa Yalous, who commands the rear, encamped upon the North West.

D Ras Michael marching from his camp at Serbraxos, is stopp'd at the mouth of the valley, and engages Powuffen and the troops of Begemder at E.

E The rebel troops of Begemder engaging Ras Michael.

F Alym Engedan, with a thousand men marches from the King's camp to reinforce Michael at the mouth of the valley.

G Powuffen's camp at Correva.

H A reinforcement marches from Powuffen's camp, and

joins the rebels engaged with Michael at E.

I Ras Michael beat back into the valley, retires under cover of his musketry at K and L, which stop the rebels advancing.

M Kessa Yalous joins the King, marches to the head of the valley, wheels to the right, and faces to the westward.

N The king's horse upon the ford of the Mariam facing westward.

OO Two bodies of the king's musketry placed to defend the ford of the Mariam.

P Ayabdar's army encamped.

QQ Ayabdar's army marches from the camp, and halts a small distance from the king's horse at NN, but retreats to SS without attacking them.

All but the Edjow Galla, who remain at T, and are all cut to pieces by the king's horse, and the musketry on the hill.

SECOND BATTLE

Explanation.

1. Gondar.
2. King's palace.
3. King's palace on the River Kaha.

4. Mahometan town on the River Kaha.

A The king marches from his camp to F by the road D and E.

GG The two bodies of horse.

HH Line of infantry, musketers, and lances alternately.

I Guebra Mafcal in ambush among the bushes.

KK Powussen's march from his camp at Corra.

LL Powussen's first appearance in disorder.

MM Powussen's line formed in the front of the king.

NN The army of Begemder galloping to charge the king, receive a close fire from Guebra Mafcal hid in the bank at I, and immediately after from the king's line H.

OO Part of the army of Begemder wheeling to the left, and flying over the plain in disorder.

PP The king, with his reserve following the right of the Begemder horse.

QQ The right of the Begemder horse pursued by the king, having rallied.

RR The Begemder horse turn

slowly surround the king at SS, and drive him to the edge of the Bank.

T The king escaping down the bank, crosses between the pools of the River Mariam, and enters the valley.

V The king arrived in the valley, is joined by the foot that ran scattered down by the bank.

W Engedan detached from the camp by Ras Michael, joins the king.

X Musketeers detached by Michael, take post on the south side of the long hill.

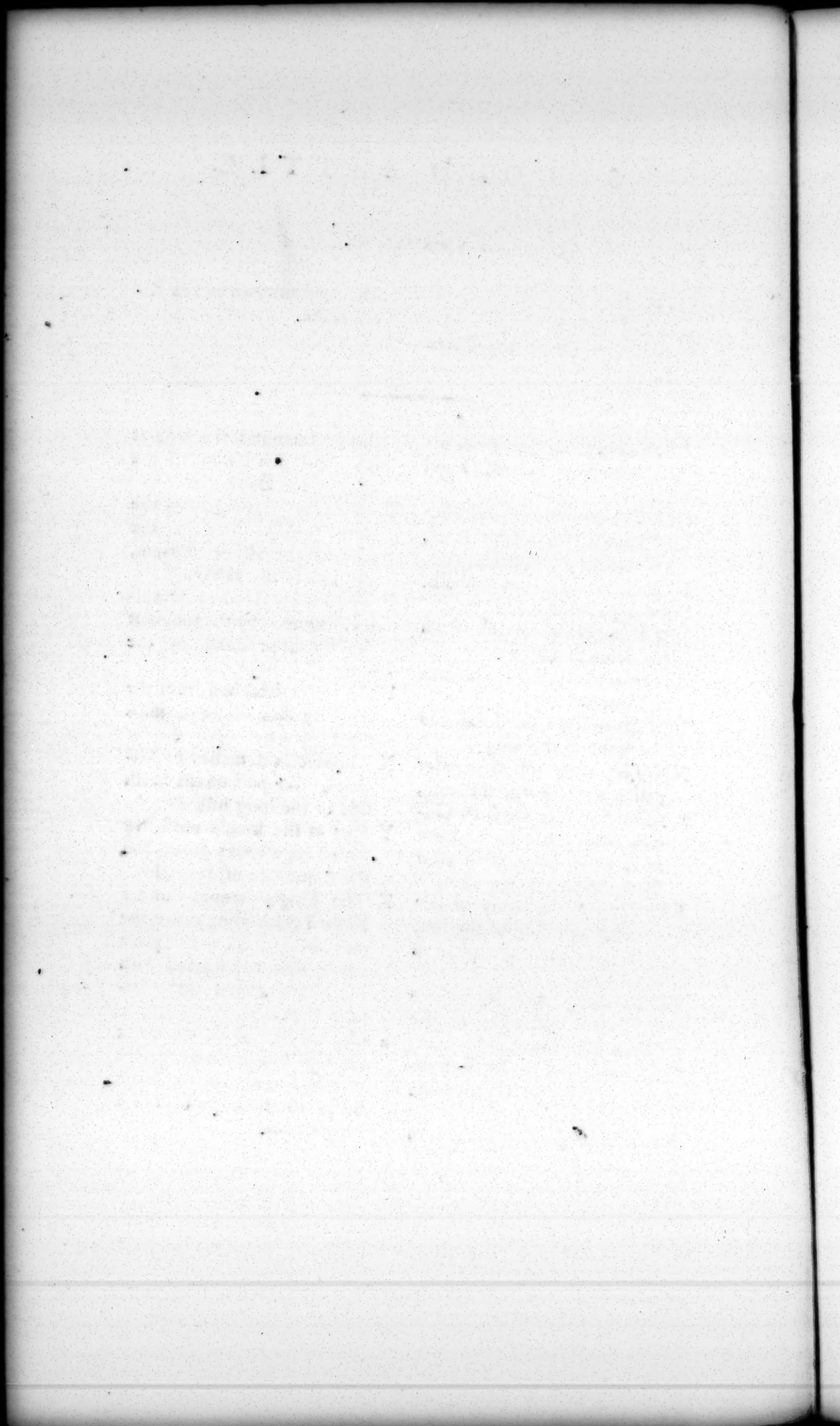
Y Part of the king's musketry posted on a rocky ground on the south side of the valley.

Z The king's troops under Kessa Valous filing down the narrow road from the plain above into the valley, with the heavy armed horse behind him.

a Guebra Mafcal drawn up at the foot of the bank, makes way by his fire for the black horse to take post in the valley.

king's from.

C Powussen's camp at Corra.
H A reinforcement marches from Powussen's camp.



THIRD BATTLE.

Explanation.

- A The center commanded by the king in person.
- B. The van encamped under Ras Michael.
- C The rear encamped, Guebra Christos being slain, commanded by several officers.
- DD Woodage Afahel marching up towards the hill to attack the king's camp.
- E Ayto Tesfos of Samen making a lodgement in the bank,

- or side of the hill, under the van, to favour the attack of Woodage Afahel.
- F Coque Abou Barea making a mock attack on the rear to create a diversion in favour of Woodage Afahel.
- G Servants of Tesfos, his camp and rebellious peasants of Mariam Ohha on a high rock.



